WHEN A MAN LOVES

ALLIE LOWE MILES

A Warner Bros. Production. *From the Painting by Nelson Gardner.*

DOLORES COSTELLO AS MANON LESCAUT.

WHEN A MAN LOVES

THE STORY OF A DEATHLESS PASSION
BASED ON THE MOTION PICTURE STORY

ADAPTED BY BESS MEREDYTH

BY

ALLIE LOWE MILES

STARRING

JOHN BARRYMORE

SPECIAL
BARRYMORE-DOLORES COSTELLO
EDITION

ILLUSTRATED WITH SCENES
FROM THE PHOTOPLAY
A WARNER BROS. PRODUCTION

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THE CAST

THE CHARACTERS	THE PLAYERS
Chevalier Fabien Des Grieux	John Barrymore
Manon Lescaut	Dolores Costello
Andre Lescaut	Warner Oland
Comte Guillot de Morfontaine	Sam De Grasse
Jean Tiberge	Holmes Herbert
Louis XV King of France	Stuart Holmes
Le Duc De Richelieu	Bertram Grasby
The Captain of the Convict Boat	Tom Santschi
Marie	Marcelle Corday
A Lay Brother	Charles Clary
Baron Chevral	Templar Saxe
The Landlady	Eugenie Besserer
Nana	Rose Dione
An Apache	Noble Johnson
A Convict Aboard the Boat	Tom Wilson

WHEN A MAN LOVES

CHAPTER I

FABIEN READY TO BECOME A PRIEST

It was a glorious May morning filled with great promise of happiness and love!

The Chevalier Fabien des Grieux, a romantically poetic youth, talked quietly with some fellow graduate students at the White Horse Inn, at Amiens, while waiting for the Paris diligence to carry them on to St. Sulpice to complete their training for the Priesthood.

Fabien's parents belonged to one of the first families of Picardy and he gallantly reflected the fact that he was a gentleman of the highest type. He was a great favorite with his student associates and inhabitants of the town. His life had been so well regulated and studious that his masters had pointed to him as a model of conduct for other scholars. Not that Fabien made any sacrifices or efforts to acquire this reputa-

tion, but a natural tranquil disposition and a love for study had made him apply his time to work and duty. He had an inborn dislike for vice that was accepted as positive proof of virtue.

Fabien had earned his title, of Chevalier, by being decorated with the cross and when the Bishop of the Diocese proposed that upon graduation he enter the Church, Fabien accepted the honor as one entirely to his liking.

Presently a lay brother rode up to the Inn and, leaving his mount outside the gate, began searching for Fabien among the people at the little iron tables in the yard. He was greatly relieved to learn from one of the students that the youth he sought was in the tavern. The kindly old man's mission was important and his face lighted up with great sympathy and love when he saw Fabien talking with Jean Tiberge, a loyal friend and fellow student—one need never worry about the company that Fabien found congenial!

"My son," said the lay brother, taking a little medal from his belt and quietly presenting it to Fabien, "here is a medal for protection against worldly evil—the Bishop

bade me give it to you before you leave us to complete your training."

Fabien bowed in reverential thanks over the lay brother's hand as he accepted the holy token. A divinely spiritual expression spread over his face. He could not refrain from thinking how little he needed such a charm. Worldly pleasures and appetites could never tempt him from his studies and calling! And those who knew him were just as sure of this as Fabien himself.

"Ah! Fabien, I am delighted," broke in Tiberge, putting his arm about his friend's shoulder. "You have earned that reward in all fairness. None of us can equal your brilliance and unselfish devotion."

"I deserve no credit—I have simply found my calling and everything else follows along naturally."

"Perhaps that is true," agreed Tiberge. "It is quite characteristic that you take no credit for anything you do."

A beautiful smile lighted up Fabien's face as he heard his friend's compliment.

"You know, Tiberge, my greatest regret at leaving here is that you are not ready to depart at the same time. It is difficult to leave a loyal friend with whom you have

grown up. I shall never forget you, and your thousand good qualities. We shall meet again, later on when we become—"

The remainder of Fabien's sentence was left unfinished when the students in the courtyard loudly announced that the diligence was appearing down the road.

* * * * * * *

The soft green leaves danced gracefully on their swaying branches and gently brushed against the dusty diligence as it wound along the narrow road through the sunshine.

The fragrant pink blossoms from the flowering trees fluttered against the windows and mingled with the dust as the horses plodded on toward the Inn.

Spring seemed to feel that she had a rival inside the great coach. It was true. Nature never made a more beautiful creation than Manon Lescaut. Her face was fair—the kind that haunted and moved men's souls. Once a man saw her she lived always in his heart. She was truly feminine, yet so deliciously beautiful that she seemed unreal.

As the great bells in the Chapel tower made themselves heard above the rumble of the diligence, Manon suddenly stopped

stroking the fluffy white kitten she held in her lap and a shadow fell across her face.

Her elder brother, André Lescaut, resplendent in the gay uniform of the Guards, watched her narrowly from his sprawled-out position on the other side of the diligence.

"What's the trouble, little sister? Are you already turning up your pretty nose at the thought of convent life?" Lescaut inquired quizzically.

"No, no, brother dear," Manon hastened to correct him, at the same time trying to control her trembling lips. "My only thought is to do as you wish and not worry you—because you are all I have."

Nevertheless, at the prospect of lonely convent life, Manon buried her face in the great pink bow on her kitten's neck so that her brother, and perhaps the other occupants of the diligence, would not see the tears that came in spite of her trying to keep them back.

Hastily, and at the same time gently, she forced her kitten into the basket, while her brother sank down in his seat to enjoy the remainder of the journey. The death of their parents had left Manon in his care.

She was seventeen and an incumbrance to his continued pursuit of pleasure if left on his hands in Paris.

Lescaut's experience with women was extensive—in one class. He knew only the women who lived by the violence of their desires. Jades exquisite only in their physical appeal. Women who were always ready to play the game of life for however much they could get out of it. A girl of Manon's fine sensibilities was a new creature to him and he treated her as a worthless inheritance to be put out of sight and mind at as small expense as possible.

But it was not destined that all men should consider Manon in this same light.

Until now she had had no contact with the world and its creatures. Her character was as beautiful and pure as her face. She thought the best of every one and knew nothing of the existence of evil.

Manon's youth and loveliness had unconsciously lured and held the hungry eyes and interest of the third passenger in the diligence. He was Comte de Ravoir, the elegantly dressed and retired Parisian banker whose fifty years on earth had given him time to accumulate a vast fortune and to

spend it on women who lavished the fever of their experienced caresses on him in return for money and jewels.

For a long while Comte de Ravoir had been surreptitiously watching Manon, over the top of his book, and his thoughts piled up something like this, "God, what a beauty! Young—untouched! Made and ready to be taught what a woman is for. She will deprive some one of great pleasure if her life is spent in a convent." Through narrowed lids his small eyes took in every detail of Manon's simple yet exquisitely girlish costume—from her charming floppy leghorn hat, her soft inexpensive gown exposing a perfect neck and arms that would have added to the luster of precious jewels; down to her daintily pointed little slippers that extended below the billowy flounces of a fluffy gown.

In his avarice and imagination the Comte was picturing how doubly magnificent she would be if his money was sent out to bring in the luxuries her beauty deserved. As his eyes traveled back to Manon's lap he saw that she was having difficulty in keeping her small pet kitten in its basket.

"Ah, an interesting situation," thought

the Comte. "Neither the charming mistress nor her pet relishes confinement—and the Convent will be just as narrow for the young lady as the basket is for the kitten—I wonder—!"

And it was just at this moment that Manon's kitten gave a leap for freedom and landed on Comte de Ravoir's lap!

The Comte straightened up and grasped the little animal in his long nervous fingers, as if determined to keep in his power, at least for a moment, something that belonged to Manon. With more intimacy than the occasion demanded the Comte smiled straight into her eyes and said, "I am afraid your pet does not want to be hidden away, and she is right when it means that she would be out of your hands and sight."

"Oh, Fifi does not mind," replied Manon with a timid little smile, not in the least understanding the Comte's hidden meaning.

However, her brother heard and slowly opened his lazy eyes to take in the little scene. As he noted the wealthy man's interest in his sister, Lescaut's bored manner faded away. A half finished yawn was forgotten. The seat no longer felt uncomfortable. Wriggling to an upright position

he watched without appearing to do so.

"Permit me to help you with your troublesome charge," offered the Comte, as he returned the kitten to Manon's lap. But the little feline was not pleased at being handled by a stranger and arching her back she also curled up her little pink lip at the Comte—as if to say, "Hands Off!"

"Fifi, dear, that is not one bit polite," admonished Manon, looking up apologetically at the Comte; but her smile faded away when she saw something in his face that she did not like, something that made her drop her gaze and devote all her attention to restoring the kitten to its basket.

No one had ever looked at Manon like that before. It seemed as though the man had turned his eyes almost inside out—they bulged, stared, blinked and watered. It was a hideous sight and Manon suddenly decided that there was something about this man that filled her with terror—and she could not look at him again. But there he was holding the basket on her lap, his hands pressing unnecessarily against her, waiting for the pet to be locked away. She looked appealingly at her brother, but if he saw her distress he gave no sign; he only smiled

and nodded his head in approval. Manon was seized with a desire to strike the man's hands away from her; yet her brother was not annoyed, so she decided it would be foolish and rude as the Comte seemed to be only offering help.

Manon hastily, and at the same time gently, forced her kitten into the basket, then lifted it quickly from her knees so there would no longer be any necessity for the Comte to keep his hands there. However, before she could place the basket on the floor the Comte had greedily touched her hands, under pretense of helping fasten the lid on the basket.

Quickly Manon turned away without again looking at the wealthy banker. Nervously resting her chin in her hands she gazed out of the diligence window toward the Convent to which she was going. A great flock of light-colored pigeons were circling around and through the highest belfry towers, and as their wings flashed like silver in the sunshine, Manon decided that it would not be so bad, after all, to leave—people—and live within the peaceful confine of the Convent walls.

The Comte de Ravoir, pleased with the

pleasant little encounter, settled back with his book again—but not to read; instead of seeing the printed page he thought, "No printed story could furnish half the zest that this young girl might give me, if she could be made to—she is not the kind who would voluntarily go—romancing."

All of this time André Lescaut was awakening to the new and unlooked-for possibilities in his sister's unconscious power to attract men. Unless there was some immediate advantage in being polite, he was extremely rude. Lescaut was without the slightest principle of honor. By inclination and skill he was a professional, gentleman gambler—a gay blade when luck ran high, but desperate and sullen when the odds were against him, as they had been lately. Money was as essential to his existence as air, and sometimes just as easy to get. At that time he had immediate use for more gold than the gaming tables would let him make while the need was so pressing.

Lescaut's eyes went to his little sister's face and he watched her with growing interest, narrowed lids and a lascivious expression. Her flowerlike face, a little sad-

dened, made him ask out of curiosity rather than love:

"Why so melancholy, little one?"

"It is almost time for us to part and I dislike being left alone—I mean that it makes me sad."

"So—you dislike being left alone, eh? Well, what would you?" But instead of looking at Manon, Lescaut quickly stole a look at Comte de Ravoir and really asked the question of him.

It was just a flash of understanding between two men of the world in the presence of a young girl who did not grasp the situation at all. But the one look that darted between the greedy and unscrupulous brother and the licentious banker planted a thought that was destined to cause great adventure and untold heartaches.

CHAPTER II

FABIEN MEETS MANON

Comte de Ravoir acknowledged Lescaut's question by slowly nodding his head and sensuously stroking his lips. Lescaut suddenly straightening up. He was no longer bored. His lips formed into a whistle and he almost let it out in his excitement.

Here he was just on the ace of throwing away his most valuable stake! His little sister—Manon—now had a new value for him. He looked at her critically and with an awakened interest. He smiled to himself as he watched the Comte devouring her with his eyes; a charming and perhaps profitable little drama of which Manon was wholly innocent.

Manon suddenly realized that her brother was staring at her. Glancing up she caught his eye and he quickly changed his expression. She reached over and trustingly nestled her hand in her brother's with a sigh of contentment.

"Well, little one, if you hate to leave me as much as that—how would you like to

spend the night in the Inn?" asked Lescaut. "We can have dinner and breakfast together before time to retire to the Convent."

"I would love to, brother dear. I suppose the Convent will be all right but I hate the thought of wearing coarse, drab convent clothing." Manon bent over and kissed her brother's hand as if ashamed of her objection to this fine thing he was doing for her.

The two men looked at each other over the girl's bent head. The Comte nodded gratefully. Lescaut was glad that the wealthy man understood why Manon was to remain at the Inn overnight. He also secretly felt that it was just as well for Manon to have expressed a hatred for ugly attire—the Comte might have the privilege of gowning her as extravagantly as he desired—provided, of course, he paid for the right.

As the diligence neared the White Horse Inn, the man on the box raised the great coach horn to his lips and blew a long and loud blast. The footman jumped off and, waiving aside the waiting students, opened the door with a flourish.

Lescaut alighted first and swaggered on toward the courtyard, utterly ignoring his sister. Comte de Ravoir stepped out next

and gallantly turned to assist Manon from the diligence as though she belonged to him.

"Permit me, my dear!"

She flushed with annoyance and scarcely touched his extended wrist as she stepped daintily to the ground.

The students watched her admiringly, but she appeared not to notice them, and they began piling into the diligence with their portmanteaus. From here they were to journey on to St. Sulpice and complete their final training as Priests.

There was just a touch of pathos in the honest admiration these young men showed for Manon. Youths going away to be Priests. But Manon was destined for the Convent. There was little or no difference —just youth giving up everything for something it thought was very much worth while, peaceful and satisfying.

Lescaut turned back and joined the Comte familiarly. They wound their way through the groups of students in the courtyard, leaving Manon to follow toward the Inn as best she could, alone.

Within the tavern the lay brother was still talking earnestly to Fabien des Grieux, who listened attentively and fondled his

medal—the charm against worldly evil sent to him by the Bishop.

"My son, the diligence has arrived. You must be on your way."

"Yes, Father, I am ready," Fabien replied and warmly grasping the holy one's hand he turned toward the door.

"Before you go, I want to say that you are about to enter upon a new life—a richer, deeper life than you have hitherto known—our blessings go with you!"

"I am grateful to you all."

Fabien hurried toward the door, forgetting his portmanteau.

The diligence horn was sounding the signal for departure and Fabien was eager to speak with his friend Tiberge before starting. As he neared the door he almost collided with Lescaut and the Comte who, engaged in close conversation, were entering the Inn arm in arm. They did not notice the young student and Fabien impatiently stood aside until they had entered. As he turned toward the entrance Manon appeared.

Feeling strange and rather lost, Manon glanced up timidly wondering if some one had come to help her. Then when she saw Fabien's face she stood still and leaned

against the doorframe for support. One hand went quickly to her throat and she pressed hard to stifle the cry of happy fulfillment that came from her heart.

But Fabien did not notice her and walked on.

As young as Manon was, she realized that she had always been waiting for some one, and that some one was the young student Priest who just passed without seeing her!

Suddenly Fabien stopped—remembering that he had forgotten his portmanteau. Or perhaps he felt the power of Manon's need as she stood there looking at him. At any rate he turned and their eyes met!

Fabien stared at Manon, fascinated as though she were some being from another world.

"Oh, my dear, my DEAR!" And he took a step toward her. His lips were parched. His throat was dry. Something greater than himself clutched his whole being.

Manon gazed at Fabien, breathlessly. Her eyes were big and luminous and her lips finally parted to say—without her knowing it—"I am so happy that you have come—I was lonely!"

Manon appeared so extremely beautiful that for the first time in his life Fabien appreciated the difference between men and women. Up until now his chaste conduct had been the theme of universal admiration among his associates. He underwent a change that deprived him of all reason and self-control when he looked upon this girl for the first time. His excessive timidness left him and without the slightest hesitation he advanced toward Manon, who in a moment had become the mistress of his heart and destiny. His fingers, that so reverently held the little charm against worldly evil, opened—and the Bishop's medal fell unnoticed to the floor. Fabien stood before Manon in ardent admiration.

"What has brought you to Amiens?" He inquired breathlessly.

"My brother has traveled here with me so that I may commence my novitiate for taking the veil at the Convent." Manon did not take her eyes from the youth's face as she replied.

Fabien heard in this announcement a deathblow to his hopes. Love had so quickened his understanding that he seemed to be another person.

"Have you any acquaintances in the town?"

"No, I shall be here entirely as a stranger when my brother returns to Paris."

The departing diligence signal and voices of the students suddenly penetrated through their consciousness. For a few blessed moments they had not known that anyone else lived.

Almost dazed, Fabien feasted his eyes upon Manon's delicate beauty. It was his promised duty to go away!

Chancing to see something bright on the floor, Manon picked up Fabien's forgotten medal and held it in her hand. He saw that it was his and mechanically extended his hand for the little charm. As their hands touched a thrill passed through them, a thrill that frightened and bewildered because they had never experienced the stimulating influence of association with anyone of the opposite sex.

With a small startled gasp, Manon pulled her hand from Fabien's warm grasp and started for the interior of the Inn.

Fabien stood rooted to the spot, unable to take his eyes from her dear departing figure.

It was thus that Tiberge, Fabien's loyal student friend, found him.

"You must hurry, Fabien, the diligence is packed and ready to leave."

But Fabien only shook his head impatiently and continued staring at the space left vacant by Manon.

"They will go without you—where is your portmanteau?" said Tiberge as he took his friend's arm and tried to make him come.

Quickly Fabien searched his mind for an excuse—he could not go, now, and leave—her—behind. "The diligence is crowded; it is better that I travel by coach, later."

This was the first lie Fabien had ever uttered and he looked away from Tiberge in embarrassment. The latter saw and was hurt, but continued urging him on.

With set jaw Fabien jerked away and said, stubbornly: "The point is not to be argued—I stay here!"

For a moment their glances clashed, then Tiberge went out into the courtyard alone.

And still Fabien remained. The hand that had touched Manon was pressed to his lips, as he whispered: "The caress of this wonder girl has engulfed my soul and done —what, to my reason?"

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JOHN BARRYMORE AS THE CHEVALIER FABIEN DES GRIEUX.

CHAPTER III

THE ELOPEMENT

WITHOUT knowing what his next move would be, Fabien proceeded aimlessly along the hall. Suddenly he was aware of voices in an adjacent room, and stopped to listen, when he heard a man say:

"I am concerned, sir, about your sister —the Convent will be a dull frame indeed for such fresh young beauty."

"What would you?" inquired Lescaut. "One cannot provide gold frames with an empty purse."

Instinctively Fabien knew that they were discussing the girl who had just conquered his senses. Crossing to a position where he could look into the room without being conspicious, he saw André Lescaut and Comte de Ravoir at a table near the window, drinking wine. With conspicuous affability the Comte was urging Lescaut to indulge freely. Then leaning across the table, his eyes narrowed, he moistened his lips greedily and said insinuatingly:

"Paris is the proper setting for her. As a connoisseur—and one of ample means—may I suggest . . ." And the Comte's hand reached for his purse.

Fabien was overcome with repugnance. He involuntarily made a move toward the window, eager to confront these men. Then he thought it would perhaps be helpful to learn more before exposing himself. He drew back in horror when he saw the Comte scatter a handful of gold on the table before the greedy brother's eyes. Fabien felt that the gold was to barter for the girl's very soul. And it was her own brother listening attentively to the bargain! Every nerve and muscle in Fabien's body was taut. He was fast learning about reactions to worldly passions.

From his place of concealment he saw the two men clink their flagons of wine together and drink a toast to the successful completion of their deal! With a satisfied smile Lescaut scooped up the gold and pocketed it.

"Landlord!" beckoned the Comte as this rotund individual chanced to pass through the room, "come here—just so. Now lend an attentive ear. Have you such a thing as a clean, comfortable coach in your stable?"

"The very best, sir. A beautiful thing," replied the landlord proudly.

"Good. Now tell me about your horses—all old and slow, I presume?"

"Ah, not all, sir. I have four that will travel faster and longer than anything in the neighborhood."

"Then those are the four I want—hitched to your, ah, beautiful coach and ready at my command, as soon as possible, to carry me and a young lady on to Paris. And here," giving him a gold piece, "take this so that you will be sure to remember."

With an understanding chuckle the landlord waddled away.

Lescaut rose to his feet and saluting the Comte said, "Comte de Ravoir, I am indebted to you! I shall go now and prepare my sister's mind for—what shall we say—her journey with you?"

From his place in the hall, Fabien knew what all this meant. Love had awakened an understanding of worldly things that he had not before imagined. His only thought was to see Manon and save her from this old roué and her brother's greed. He decided that she must have retired to her room. It was out of the question for him to follow

her, so he rushed out into the yard and walking around the Inn eagerly scanned the windows, praying that he would see her. Luck was with him.

On a beautiful vine-covered balcony, not far up from the ground, Manon stood with her fluffy little white kitten cuddled against her neck. But Fabien was forced to restrain himself because Lescaut was just joining her. He knew that it was to tell Manon about plans far more distasteful than entering a Convent.

While Fabien was trying to think of what he could do to prevent the situation, Lescaut was saying to his sister:

"I had not realized before that you are pretty—you are worth studying," scrutinized Lescaut.

"Why, André! Why are you so flattering?" Manon was puzzled and pleased at this first compliment from her brother.

"In truth, my dear, you are worth it! Let me see your eyes—your profile—your neck is truly beautiful." Lescaut tilted back her chin and half squinted through an experienced eye as he looked her over. "Is that color on your cheeks real?" he asked as her face flushed at this bewildering procedure.

"Of course it is!"

"Well, one should pay high for that. The old buffalo is right—you are a beauty, Manon."

Manon started to laugh. This was such a funny way for her indifferent brother to act. Yet she was pleased, so made him a graceful curtsy and said, "I like to have you nice to me and think I am—all right."

"How would you like to cut the Convent and go to Paris?" inquired Lescaut airily.

"I would adore it!" Manon's face lit up with eager childish pleasure.

"It was the Comte's idea," supplied Lescaut casually.

"Why should he be interested?" inquired Manon, with her pretty white forehead all wrinkled up in an effort to solve the puzzle.

Not until then, when Lescaut realized that she was helplessly innocent, did he bluntly explain the Comte's proposition.

Manon was horrified. Her hands frantically covered her ears and then her eyes as if to shut out the whole terrible thing from her mind.

"No—not that ugly old man who was in the diligence?" Manon looked appealingly at her brother through a mist of tears.

"Yes. He will give you all the things that I cannot afford to buy—laces, velvets, diamonds! You are young and pretty—now that I think it over, you should not be buried in a musty convent." Lescaut talked so soothingly, patting his sister's shoulder, but all the time there was a quizzical, sardonic gleam in his eyes.

"But I would rather go to the Convent than have him around!"

"My dear, you are too young to know what you like. It is very generous of the gentleman to want to do so much for you."

Manon was like a poor little trapped bird.

Lescaut had won his point and felt that he could be magnanimous. "You will not be lonesome in Paris—I will drop in often." With that he patted Manon on the shoulder and sauntered from the room.

All of Manon's vivacity had been crushed out of her. Her dainty little figure drooped. Leaning contemplatively over the rail of the balcony she dabbed at her tear-stained eyes.

Slowly she began to realize that some one in the courtyard was trying to attract her attention. It was Fabien. He had been waiting patiently for Lescaut's departure.

When Manon saw him he was gazing at

her with worship and true adoration in his eyes. His whole attitude and the comfort he seemed to inspire made her feel that he was the one person in the world she could trust. She held her hands appealing toward him.

With an expression denoting only unselfish love and tenderness Fabien answered her call for help.

Moving quickly over toward the low-hung balcony, he impulsively climbed up the jutting stone wall and grasped the railing so that he could look adoringly at her.

"There are tears in your eyes—"

"They will go away now," she replied tremulously, but when more tears continued to come she explained. "My brother has made some miserable plans for me and my heart is breaking."

"I know—I heard them talking. That is why I am here."

"But nothing can be done. Apparently it is the will of Heaven."

The sweetness of Manon's expression and the air of sorrow with which she announced her fate so affected Fabien that without a moment's thought of what might be involved he said, impulsively:

"You have inspired me with a tender interest. Trust to my honor and I will sacrifice my life to save you from the tyranny of this situation."

"Oh, if you could I shall owe you more than life itself could repay."

"No, not that—just trust me more than anyone else in the world."

"I do trust you, Monsieur, and I—I—need a friend."

Fabien's hand went out to hers in protection. As they looked deep into each other's eyes the moment was too big for either of them.

A noise in the stable yard drew their attention that way, and Manon cried out in sick realization as she saw the coachman climb on the box and gather up the reins that held four prancing horses in check.

"That is the coach that the Comte has ordered to take you away." Both of Fabien's hands tightened over Manon's slender ones.

"I *can't* go with *him!*" cried Manon, looking hopefully at Fabien.

Slowly he grasped her meaning. She was suggesting that he take her away. The very thought made him forget his boyhood.

Trembling with emotion, he inquired, "Will you trust yourself to me?"

"Oh, yes! . . . Wait while I get my things."

Manon forgot her former terror, and running into the room gathered up her bag and little Fifi. She was back on the balcony in a moment, her arms full.

With difficulty Fabien helped her over the railing and they began their dangerous and thrilling descent to the ground. Like two children on a lark they raced across the courtyard and drew up breathlessly at the waiting coach.

Fabien opened the door with a lordly gesture, and turning to Manon said, "May I help you in—and here are your bag and basket!"

Fabien was fast learning that he was less a boy than he had imagined.

The man on the box looked down protestingly, "This coach was ordered for the Comte de Ravoir."

"Well?" thundered Fabien threateningly. Then with an eloquent swing he took out a purse of gold from his belt, and tossed it indifferently to the coachman.

"Your pardon, M'sieu le Comte," apol-

ogized the man. "I had not expected to see so young a gentleman."

Fabien raised his hand in a gesture that seemed to signify, All right, but no more mistakes from now on. Then he said, "Just a moment and we will pull out with all speed."

A clever thought had come to Fabien, and dashing into the stables he disappeared from sight for a few seconds. When he climbed into the coach with Manon he wore a worldly expression of cunning and satisfaction that would have amazed the Bishop.

With the crack of a long whip and the clatter of horses' hoofs, the coach started down the driveway toward the road.

* * * * * * *

In the meantime, Lescaut had been vainly searching the Inn for Manon. In chagrin and desperation he was finally forced to admit to the Comte that he could not find her.

"What?" The Comte paused in the midst of ordering the servants to carry his luggage to the coach. "She must be about some place!"

Lescaut glanced out of the door rather than meet the Comte's eyes. He saw the coach turning into the main highway.

Grasping the Comte's arm he cried in amazement, "My God! There is Manon—see her through the rear window and there is a *man* with her!"

This last was uttered as Fabien's head came through the window, urging the coachman to lash the horses into greater speed.

Lescaut and the Comte hastened out into the courtyard.

They were joined by Tiberge, Fabien's friend, who had recognized his fellow student as Manon's companion. Tiberge had a singular affection for his friend and from what he had seen of Fabien's strange actions he suspected the youth's passion. He wanted to save him from ruin. But was it too late? Unconsciously Tiberge fingered the rosary at his belt and whispered a prayer for Fabien's salvation.

"Landlord!" shouted Lescaut frantically.

The fat little man came running from the Inn.

"Prepare some horses immediately! We must overtake the coach."

Lescaut was in a furious temper. To think that inexperienced Manon could get away from *him* just when she had become a valuable property! Putting aside his own

annoyance he tried to soothe the Comte as they walked hurriedly toward the stable.

No sooner had they arrived than the landlord met them at the door with the startling news, "There is not a horse in the stalls! The young scoundrel cut them all loose before he left."

"But we must overtake them!" whined the Comte impatiently.

"Impossible, sir. There are no horses in the countryside that can overtake the ones I assigned to that coach."

In hopeless, temporary defeat, Lescaut and the Comte retired to the Inn to plan on setting a trap for Manon as soon as she arrived in Paris with her young escort.

CHAPTER IV

IN PARIS

Manon was on her knees, perched upon the seat, looking out the small back window of the coach at her brother and the wealthy roué, from whom Fabien had just saved her. As a bend in the road hid the courtyard from sight she settled down into the seat with a great sigh of relief.

"Do you suppose they will come after us?" This was a new worry.

"They may want to," consoled Fabien. "But they will have a hard time getting started because I turned all the horses loose just before we left."

This amused Manon and she laughed delightedly. It was the first time Fabien had seen her in a gay mood. The laugh was so infectious that he joined her in sheer delight. Again they were like two youngsters on a day's excursion, with no thought of trouble to mar their enjoyment.

Gropingly Fabien's hand went in search of Manon's. A thrill of ecstasy passed

through them at the warm contact, and sitting close together they looked trustingly into each other's eyes.

Fabien's heart expanded to include a thousand bits of pleasure of which until now he had not the remotest idea. A delicious consciousness of enjoyment spread through his mind and soul. He sank into a kind of delirium in which he thought only of the beautiful trusting young girl at his side and the fact that he was her chosen escort.

The coach traveled on through the morning sunshine toward Paris.

At twilight, that same night, Manon and the Chevalier Fabien des Grieux found themselves on the streets of Paris. They had not been stopped en route and the fear of being caught had vanished with their growing absorption in each other.

The more Fabien saw of Manon the more perfect he thought her. Her beauty, her heart, her mind and her very gentleness took such a binding and agreeable hold on him that he predicted perfect future happiness in its enduring influence.

Carrying their meager belongings they mingled with the crowds on the Boulevard.

Walking along, hand in hand, interested in each other more than is usual with pedestrians, they formed a sharp contrast to the strutting dandies and gay students paying casual court to pretty grisettes, their companions of the moment.

If Fabien had not been so absorbed in Manon he would have noticed and resented the admiring and covetous glances showered upon her by the dashing uniformed officers. These men of the world had not seen a woman as refreshingly lovely as Manon for many a day. To them, her natural charm was far more attractive than the artificial beauty of the aristocratic white-wigged occupants of the chairs that passed along the street.

But Manon saw one of these gorgeous creatures and immediately felt pale and insignificant by comparison.

Strangely enough, a woman is never satisfied with unadorned beauty. Perhaps it is the pleasure she derives from adding brighter color, new lines and a different expression to her countenance. She feels that she is making a more interesting creation of herself. Her mood invariably brightens with the application of rouge and her eyes

flash happily beneath daintily penciled brows.

"Fabien, look at that lady! I didn't know there were such pretty things as she has on!"

Manon's awakened love for adornment made her wide eyed.

Just then the throngs scattered to the side of the road as mounted guards cantered ahead of the King's great golden coach and cleared the way. In the general excitement Manon and Fabien were the only ones who did not realize that King Louis XV was passing by. In fact their absorption in each other and total ignorance of what was taking place almost caused an accident. The outriders were forced to rein in their horses to keep from trampling down the young couple that went merrily on as though everything had been stopped for their special benefit instead of the King's!

His Majesty was surprised at being jolted to such an abrupt halt. It was most unusual. Something extraordinary must have caused the stop.

King Louis was not the type of Royalty who sat back waiting to be informed of is-

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THE ARRIVAL OF MANON LESCAUT IN THE VILLAGE OF AMIENS.

sues at hand. If he wanted to do a thing—he went ahead. If he wanted to find out anything he investigated the matter personally.

That is why the people on the street had such a splendid opportunity to see their king; for he raised the silken coach shade himself and looking out saw Manon and Fabien, hand in hand, holding up the procession while they went on their love-lit way quite unperturbed.

The King was spellbound and gave the couple more than a casual glance. The girl had a face one never forgot! What wouldn't he give if there was a woman who could make him forget his surroundings as that girl had apparently made her escort forget. Why! It would be worth a kingdom! No one knew better than Louis how easy it was to force people to do his bidding; but no compulsion in the world can command love—not even the Divine Right of Kings. It is a blessed gift that should be tenderly cherished when it once springs into being.

His Majesty came out of this reverie when he realized that his aide and the prime minister, incensed beyond control at this

sign of disrespect, were leaving the coach to punish the disloyal subjects.

"Let them alone." The King spoke quietly, yet firmly. "Their pretty bubble will burst all too soon in this Paris of ours."

The King watched until Manon and Fabien had disappeared down another street. With a little sigh of envy and a smile of self-pity he settled back on the luxurious silken cushions and ordered the procession to proceed.

His aide and the prime minister did not understand what was passing in their King's mind, but then that happened very often.

It was impossible to account for King Louis' moods!

* * * * * * *

Still utterly oblivious of the fact that they had delayed the King, Manon and Fabien wandered hand in hand along the streets of Paris.

In front of a jeweler's shop crouched a blind beggar, entreating alms from the passer-by. His sightless eyes hid from him the fact that the couple drawing near were in greater need of money than he had been for many a day. But perhaps he sensed Manon's compassion and knew that his palm

would be filled. He was right. She could not endure to see anyone suffer, especially now when life was full of newly discovered happiness.

"Oh, Fabien, the poor old man!" she whispered sympathetically. "He can't see how beautiful the world is. Give him just one little sou—for luck!"[2]

Eager to please Manon at all times, Fabien fumbled at his belt and drew out a very slim purse, from which he selected a coin and dropped it into the beggar's hand.

Manon must not know how little money he had. It would make her sad, and his adored one should never be that way if a few sacrifices on his part could gratify her whims.

Fabien had not thought about women until Manon came into his life, and for that reason it pleased him that now his first thoughts were of and for her. A woman as adorable as she should never have a single worry, all her desires should be gratified. Her mind and time should be free to make herself lovelier. Fabien felt that she was destined for love, and he gladly took upon himself the task of protecting her from the slightest annoyance or disappointment.

Although it was only a moment before the next demand was made, he did not have any idea how far her craving for luxuries was going to drive him. This time Manon was fascinated by a little diamond locket. It glittered alluringly on its velvet cushion in the window of a quaint jewelry shop, and Manon stopped in admiration and longing.

Could it be possible that this was the demure little girl who was ready, just the day before, to enter a convent for the rest of her life? Surely it is true that the heart of woman is subject to quick changes. Yet no man concerned should ever blame her because it is love for him that usually causes these swift and varied impulses. Yet Manon did not realize this, and when she saw the gorgeous little trinket she confided to Fabien:

"I have wanted a locket like that—the round one with the diamonds—all my life!"

"You have?" Fabien looked at her in surprise and regret. It was amazing to him that anyone could spend time wishing for a bit of jewelry, yet if Manon had wanted a locket for so long it was a crime that the desire should not have been gratified.

"Oh, yes, isn't it lovely? And there is

probably room for two pictures." Manon's interest increased with the thought of additional possibilities.

"If you want it as much as that—you shall have it!" Fabien was bravely determined to accomplish the impossible.

"Oh, that would be wonderful!"

And Manon looked at Fabien with so much confidence and admiration that he would have promised to bring the King to her on bended knee. Had he only known the truth this would have been a far easier task to accomplish.

"You wait here and watch these things—I will be back in a moment," Fabien advised as he put down their luggage on the street beside Manon and strode into the store.

Unfortunately it was one of the most exclusive and expensive shops in Paris. It was an ornate jewel in itself. But Fabien did not think or know anything at the moment except that Manon wanted something and that he was there to get it for her.

He entered with all the confidence of a man possessing unlimited funds. Being a gentleman by birth, it was quite natural for Fabien to ignore the smirk of the foppish and elegantly attired owner and demand

that he bring the little diamond locket from the window.

Rubbing his hands in keen anticipation and bowing obsequiously the while, the dapper owner soon placed in Fabien's hands the priceless medallion which Manon in her childish desire had so coveted and which Fabien in his eager ardor to please her was now examining with more attention.

With assumed carelessness Fabien brought forth his nearly depleted purse and casually inquired the price.

"Ah, Monsieur, the price? It is a mere trifle!" bowed the jeweler and continued with a shrug of his shoulders: "It is really of little consequence. The price, Monsieur, is only one thousand louis d'or."

With a gasp of dismay Fabien staggered back, pathetically clutching the slim purse. Gone in a moment was his beautiful dream of placing in Manon's hand the lovely bauble her heart so desired. In its place came a true vision, one of stern realities and the immediate necessity of replenishing his small hoard of gold coins.

Glancing over his shoulder, through the window he saw Manon with her beautiful young face pressed eagerly against the glass.

Her trust in Fabien was implicit and her faith in his ability to please her was unbounded.

With strengthened courage Fabien turned back to the jeweler and said, "Have you something for about a louis?"

Turning his back, with a withering glance of disdain, the jeweler spun about with a pompous dignity that to Fabien would have been ridiculous had it been less serious, and stalked off to the rear of the store. He signaled for his junior salesman to take care of the trifling wants of a customer whose flat purse was an insult to the traditions of the fashionable shop.

Fabien completely lost his grand manner and apologetically made known his wishes. Much to his chagrin he found that even the cheapest locket in the establishment was beyond the amount in his purse, and even the apprentice salesman looked upon him with scorn.

But Manon must be pleased.

Her eager childish face was still pressed against the window. Desperately Fabien searched his pockets for anything that might possibly be turned into money to add to his pitifully small amount.

Suddenly his downcast eyes lighted up as he noticed the ornate silver buckles on his well-fitting shoes. Here at last was something that would keep the smile on Manon's pretty lips.

Fabien gave a short despairing glance at Manon and turning to the salesman said, "If Monsieur will accept these buckles in exchange for the locket—"

With a glance of disgust the salesman turned away and sought the owner. In a moment they returned and after carefully examining the buckles grudgingly agreed to the trade.

With a light heart and smiling face Fabien received the precious package and eagerly returned to Manon, who, having already grown tired of waiting, had turned away from the window and was ardently watching each elegantly gowned woman as she passed.

To Manon's childish mind the sharp contrast of the beautiful silks and rustling gowns to her own meager outfit brought a pang of envy to her heart, but she smilingly turned to meet Fabien with outstretched hands. The beautiful medallion would soon make her forget her envy of these other

women. Besides, would not Fabien buy her all the pretty things that the shops had to offer?

Anxiously Fabien watched as her dainty fingers quickly unwrapped the small package he had given her. Eagerly she undid the last cord and as eagerly raised the cover. The tiny cheap locket met her gaze—the locket for which Fabien had been forced to exchange his silver shoe buckles in order to meet the price.

A startled cry of disappointment escaped Manon as she said, "Fabien, this is not the locket—" then her lifted eyes caught the look of agony on his face. She dropped her head in shame. Her lowered glance took in Fabien's shoes—without the buckles. Then she understood. Her arms gripped him spasmodically, her eyes filled with tears and, with a beautiful smile lighting up her face, she said, "Fabien, it is the most beautiful locket in the world."

CHAPTER V

ALL VOWS FORGOTTEN

And so once more it was wonderful to be alive. The world again was smiling on these two lovers as hand in hand they continued on their way, with eyes only for each other, and satisfied with the message they conveyed.

A thunderclap and the sudden pelt of rain brought them to their senses, and realizing the immediate need for shelter, they hurried along.

The shabby little door of a pension across the way offered them shelter, and guiding Manon through the hurrying throng, Fabien was relieved to take what small protection it gave.

The door of the pension suddenly opened behind them, and completely framed therein stood the fat landlady. She eyed them curiously for a moment, then smiled knowingly and said:

"Does the nice gentleman wish a room for himself and his pretty wife?"

With a startled glance Manon and Fabien looked at each other. For a moment they did not grasp the real purport of the words.

Without waiting for them to reply the landlady continued, "I've just the place you're looking for and very cheap, too."

Again Manon and Fabien gazed earnestly at each other. Then as the necessity for shelter was so alarmingly important Fabien decided that they had no choice in the matter and nodded his head affirmatively.

The landlady beckoned them in through the open door, and with a protecting arm about Manon's shoulders Fabien guided her into the dreary hallway.

* * * * * * *

The interior of the pension was even shabbier than the outside. It was fortunate that an economic lighting system could conceal rather than display the untidy walls and faded carpets.

Marie, a starved, yet wise little soul, was the maid of all work. Her greatest pleasure was to peek into the lives of others and find out how they spent their time. To her

housecleaning was as uninteresting as the life of an irreproachable boarder.

In short, Marie reveled in dirt—of all kinds—and that is one reason that this particular pension had more on the surface than is usual with such places.

When the landlady summoned Marie to show the new arrivals to the vacant room she left her dust broom and pan on the stairs and clattered down with excitement enough to make one believe she had been invited on an all day's excursion.

"New people—men? Where are they from? Wonder what they're like?" she thought as she came toward them in the dimly lighted hall.

Marie prided herself on the fact that nothing could surprise her, so it was quite a tribute to Manon when the slavey's mouth dropped open and her eyes stared in amazement.

"Glory be!" thought Marie. "She's an angel!"

A quick scrutiny of Fabien proved disappointing. According to her views, he was far too refined and gentle. If Marie could have selected a man for herself or the lovely girl who stood before her he would have

a beautiful, sharply waxed mustache, shoulders full of glittering finger curls and a great diamond shining from wide, fluffy lace at his neck. He would wear a crimson satin coat and sky-blue breeches and a strongly scented lace handkerchief would dangle from a big ruby finger ring. That was the kind of a man for a lady to have—or at least it was Marie's idea of a prospect.

However, people seldom met with Marie's ideas of perfection. With a jerk she brought herself back from her dream and said: "Come to your room. It's on the top floor, so I hope your wind is good. You'd better hold to the railing so you won't fall," she turned to advise, then continued, "yours is a nice room when you get to it, but it's the going up and coming down that's bad."

Marie chatted incessantly all the way up. Finally she threw open a door at the top of the last flight of stairs and disclosed a cozy attic room with dormer windows. The few pieces of furniture were cheap, yet some bright prints on the wall and gay curtains at the window gave the welcome interior an air of artistic shabbiness that was really attractive.

Even with Fabien's help the climb had

wearied Manon, but standing in the doorway she clasped her hands in childlike delight at this welcome haven of rest. Crossing to the bed, she released Fifi. "Poor little darling, you are all cramped and tired, aren't you?" said Manon stroking her pet with gentle fingers.

Marie followed the motion of her graceful hand with envy. Then as she noticed Manon's ringless wedding finger her tongue went into her cheek with a wise little smirk, and she thrilled at her discovery.

There was just a little bit of sarcasm in Marie's voice as she said, "I hope the room pleases *Madam.*" And with an understanding glance at them both she insolently banged the door and went hurrying downstairs.

Fabien understood her insinuation and was furious. He would like to have followed and wrung her neck. It was intolerable to think of his idol being subjected to insult because of him. People were blind fools not to hold Manon in the high esteem she deserved. Yet why let a servant make him angry when Manon's sweet innocence had protected her from being hurt at the smirch.

Manon had stopped in her survey of the

room to look from the cunning window. "Oh, Fabien, come here!" she called in delight. "See the lamplighter down there brightening up the rainy street—it makes the room seem so much more homelike." She smiled at Fabien through a half suppressed yawn.

"My dear, you are tired from your long trip," sympathized Fabien. "Give me your hat."

"I cannot—I am too weary." She collapsed into a chair, and just to prove how tired she was she let her arms hang limply at her sides.

"Then it is my privilege to do it for you." With trembling fingers Fabien removed the big, floppy hat and quickly turned away to hide his emotion.

Rain was falling on the roof above their heads. They were alone, and Fabien thrilled with a supreme sense of mature pleasure that it was his fortune to take care of Manon.

"You must be hungry. I am. I will run downstairs and get something for supper," said Fabien.

"Yes, do!" Manon adored having Fabien so attentive. "And—wait—bring something especially nice for Fifi."

With a reassuring wave of his hand, Fabien picked up his hat and reluctantly left the room.

For a moment Manon's heart sank. She loved Fabien tenderly and was sure that she wanted to spend the rest of her life with him alone. It was not easy to be parted and left in a strange room, but of course they must eat and he would be back with some food before very long.

Manon threw herself down on the bed beside Fifi and played with the pink ribbon around her neck. Suddenly she remembered her new locket and took it out of the little box with an ill concealed feeling of disappointment.

"I am ashamed of myself! It is much better than I deserve, and Fabien was a darling to get it for me!" Manon always talked aloud when she and Fifi were alone. It had made her solitary girlhood days seem less lonely. "I think I should wear it—don't you, Fifi, dear? But I have no chain—I know what I will do! I will just borrow your necklace for awhile." Manon removed the ribbon collar from Fifi's neck and used it as a chain for her little locket—the locket

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"MADEMOISELLE, I PROFFER MY SERVICES; PLEASE TRUST ME AS A FRIEND."

for which Fabien had exchanged his silver slipper buckles.

"Fifi, dear, I am so sleepy I cannot stay up a moment longer." Manon kicked off first one slipper and then the other. "You are lucky, preciouskins, when you get tired all you have to do is curl up and drop off to sleep—I wish I could do that!"

In the meanwhile Fabien dashed about in the rain from one little store to another searching for food that he thought Manon would like.

Since the beginning of time it has been man's duty to supply food for his mate, but never before had mortal man taken as keen pleasure in stalking home with laden arms as did Fabien on that first night to the little attic room.

Not even Marie's wise smile as she let him in the door could destroy his happy contentment. Manon was his very life, and she was waiting for him!

As Fabien opened the door to their little attic room he whispered, "Manon!" No answer. "God, what has happened?" he cried as he rushed in and looked wildly about.

Then he paused in speechless reverence

as he saw Manon, in a little white, high necked nightdress, curled up on the bed, fast asleep, with Fifi at her side.

For a long time Fabien stood and looked at her. Knowing her had made a different man of him. Her love, beauty and trustfulness had eaten into his very soul. His only sin—if anyone dares call it that—was that he loved Manon to the exclusion of all else. There were many who were saying that a girl had ruined his life, but if they could have heard the prayer he uttered would they have been so sure in their condemnation?"

"Dear God in Heaven," he prayed, "help me take care of her! Help me to keep her always as good, as sweet, loving and tender as she is now. Help me to protect and provide for her always. I am grateful that she has been assigned to my care and I pray that I shall prove worthy of her trust. Help me, dear God! Amen!"

After this prayer Fabien resolutely turned his back on Manon and went over to the table with his bundles as though he had just entered the room. With trembling fingers he fumbled at the knots to untie the packages. The picture of her, lying asleep,

was so vividly impressed on his mind that he could concentrate on nothing else. Nervously he wiped the moisture from his forehead. He put his handkerchief away and immediately took it out again. In his upset condition he had mixed the food all up with crumpled paper and bits of string.

Unable to resist the temptation any longer, Fabien turned and again feasted his eyes upon Manon. She was still asleep. To him her beauty was incomparable. Her golden curls were spread out on the pillow and her beautiful pink lips were parted in a sleeping smile. Pressed against her cheek with the palm of her hand was his locket!

To have such forbidden loveliness so temptingly near was almost more than Fabien could endure. With labored breath and clenched fists he turned resolutely away to keep from seizing her in his arms. He strode to the open window and stood looking out at the approaching storm. The storm within himself was at the moment just as impossible to control. With set face he peered unseeingly through the rain. Mad thoughts were setting his brain on fire, his temples throbbed, his blood flooded his

heart so fast and furiously that he thought it could never stand the strain.

Exhausted from the strain of this first fight with himself, Fabien sank into the big chair by the window and buried his burning head in his hands.

The storm outside became more furious. A blinding flash of lightning lit up the room. Fabien did not move.

A resounding clap of thunder awakened Manon, and with a terrified start she sat up in bed and looked wildly about. Sleep had been so sound and the awakening so sudden that she did not realize where she was. But when a second zigzag of lightning opened the heavens and filled the room with light she saw Fabien and rushed to him without a moment's thought or hesitation. Like a terrified child she threw herself into his arms and cuddled close—her face hidden against his shoulder to shut out the terrifying storm.

Fabien's face was white and strained. Just when he had about conquered himself it was difficult to have Manon precipitate herself so appealingly into his lap. He tried to pat her shoulder reassuringly, but a still more vivid flash of lightning seemed to set the room on fire and Manon's arms

went tightly around Fabien's neck as she clung to him in terror.

Surely this was a strange answer to Fabien's prayer. No possible power could help him fight his passion any longer. With a cry of happy relief, his arms went about Manon and strained her to him. He kissed her neck—the first kiss he had ever given a woman. He buried his head in her shoulder and kissed her again and again.

Manon looked at him bewilderingly. His eyes tried to convey their passion. He bent reverently and touched her lips. In a moment he was holding her tighter and kissing her wildly. Manon was no longer frightened. Her beautiful eyes, filled with flaming love and adoration, were at the same time dreamy and elusive. Fabien again held her close and kissed her madly.

The little candle on the table flickered in its stem, sputtered and went out.

CHAPTER VI

LOVE, YOUTH AND POVERTY

A COMPANY of three, Manon, Fabien and poverty, lived happily together in the little attic room. They were concerned only with their great love and meager wants.

Their project of marriage was forgotten. They innocently defrauded the Church of her rights and found themselves united as man and wife without thought or fear of consequences.

So absorbed was Fabien in his passion that he gave little thought to his family. He never dreamed of the distress that his mysterious absence was causing his father. Not for a moment did he doubt Manon's power to captivate and win his family's admiration and blessing. Back of it all was the idea of obtaining his father's consent to their marriage, and Fabien explained to Manon that aside from filial duty and love it would be wise because his father had unlimited means, and their slim finances were

already sadly reduced with no available means of replenishing them.

For the time being, however, life was too sweet to mar it by the slightest change. Thoughts and things that might have been worries were forgotten in the ecstasy of a kiss or the forgetfulness of an embrace.

Even poor little Fifi was neglected. Her milk saucer was not always full, and she probably wondered why her fish bone was dry and hard instead of juicy with luscious flesh.

One morning as Manon was holding Fifi in her arms, explaining that lack of food did not matter because she always ate too much anyway, Fifi playfully clawed at the ribbon around Manon's neck and the locket became untied and rolled off on the floor.

"You shall have a fine gold chain for your locket when we become rich," said Fabien as he returned the trinket.

"Oh, you darling!" Manon rushed to him and snuggled impulsively into his arms. "Fabien, you must promise never to scold me for liking beautiful things, especially jewelry, for I adore it!"

"I shall never scold you, sweetheart. I, too, like beautiful things, and we shall have

them—some day. In the meantime, do you suppose you could help me fix the lace in my cuffs?"

With his arm around Manon, Fabien led her to the window, where his coat was spread over a chair, disclosing a pair of badly soiled lace ruffles.

"They seem to be hopless," said Manon sympathetically.

A whiff of wind blew the window curtain across the chair. The creamy lace net flouncing on the bright colored chintz seemed to offer itself as a solution to their problem. Quickly Manon tore off the bottom ruffle and fastened a fresh neat lace in each cuff. It was ingenious and they laughed happily at their success.

Back of them the door opened without warning and Marie unceremoniously burst into the room.

"The old lady says you got to dig up the rent," she announced without hesitation.

An empty purse forced Fabien to face stern reality. He wondered why the landlady insisted upon the rent being paid. Was it a streak of meanness? Surely she did not need the money.

Manon's reaction to the demand was quite

the opposite to Fabien's. To her it seemed funny for anyone to ask money from them. She could scarcely suppress her laughter.

Marie always wanted to smile when Manon laughed, but this was business. Besides, she hated Fabien as much as she liked his mistress, so she kept a straight face, and turning toward him belligerently she said: "Well, what about it? You've been here a week to-day."

"A whole week!" broke in Manon suddenly. "Fabien, to-day, then is our anniversary!"

A rueful nod was Fabien's only answer.

With upturned palm Marie continued to hold her ground, and her presence and demands so infuriated Fabien that he glared and said, "Get out!"

Knowing that this attitude would do no good, Manon rushed to the door and whirled the angry girl about just as she was ready to flounce from the room.

Marie had worshiped Manon since the first time she saw her in the hallway that rainy night, so it needed just a little coaxing and pleading for Manon to persuade her not to report to the landlady about the unpaid rent.

With one arm about Marie, Manon signaled for Fabien to leave the room. Marie was antagonized by his presence, and she could handle the situation better alone. Fabien interpreted the signal correctly and, greatly amused, gathered up his wraps and quickly departed, with a final kiss blown from his finger tips before he closed the door.

Marie looked after him in disgust, then back at Manon appraisingly: "You are a silly little fool to waste your time on a pauper. With your looks you ought to be rolling in money—and you could if you set your mind to it."

But Manon shook her head and said, "I would never think of such a thing—we love each other."

Knowing the ways of pretty young women in Paris, Marie smiled wisely when she replied: "You'll come to it—Paris will teach you that diamonds give a lot more light than penny candles."

With a laughing shrug Manon dismissed the idea.

"Marie, come here," she coaxed. "I want you to do a very special favor for me—promise before I explain!"

"Well, yes, I'll do it. What is it?" It was impossible to refuse Manon anything, besides, there was a touch of mystery in this, and Marie loved mystery.

"I want you to take my locket, go to the first jewelry shop that you come to on the Boulevard and ask the owner to take it back in return for the gentleman's buckles that were left there a week ago. Can you remember that?"

"I can remember well enough," answered Marie disdainfully, "but it's a crazy thing to do!"

"No, it is not. They are Fabien's, and I want to return them to him on our first anniversary—to-night. Please?" coaxed Manon.

"Well, all right. Give me the locket. Just the same, I think you are a little fool." Marie went out the door grumbling.

It was a relief to get rid of her, because after Fabien's departure Manon had been impatient to look from the window and wave to him. He would be waiting in the street below. Ever since their sojourn in the little attic room it had been a sort of ritual with them.

Manon danced over to the window and

looked down. Fabien was there! The worry vanished from his face and he smiled happily. She had been so long in coming he thought she had forgotten!

Fabien was so engrossed in gazing at his adored one that he backed into a pushcart, loaded high with fresh fruit and vegetables. All the produce, the vendor, the cart and the young lover were scrambled together on the street in an appalling mess.

Manon, perched high above the scene, was the only one who laughed. Fabien extricated himself from the vegetables and dashed quickly around the corner before the owner of the wrecked cart had a chance to know what and who caused all the troublesome havoc.

Manon was convulsed with laughter. It was especially amusing to see sedate Fabien do such an undignified thing. After Fabien had disappeared she remained at the window gathering a bouquet of bright little flowers from the boxes. She planned to have them on the table when Fabien returned. It was a great pleasure for her to do little things like that because he was always so appreciative and grateful. How happy she was! Life was just a glorious

mingling of thrills and contentment.

* * * * * * *

While Fortune had smiled on Manon and Fabien for a whole week, it had taken this same time to play many false tricks on André Lescaut.

Determined to find his sister, Lescaut and the Comte had combed Paris. A great deal of money had been spent on what proved to be a vain search. It seemed impossible that an inexperienced girl and a young student Priest could have eluded them. Lescaut was desperate. He wanted easy money from the Comte, but the crafty old retired banker had flatly refused to hand out any more until Manon was safely delivered to his quarters.

Lescaut had just about decided to give up the search when he paused in his wanderings until the débris from an overturned pushcart could be cleared from the walk. As chance would have it, this was the very accident that Fabien's absorption in Manon had brought about. Bored with the incident, Lescaut began looking around at the people and houses, as he had been scanning faces for a whole week it had become a habit. Suddenly his roving eyes saw Ma-

non picking flowers from her window boxes.

Immediately his whole countenance became brighter, and he strode across the street to the pension as though a moment's delay might prove disastrous.

The landlady was eager enough to direct "such a grand gentleman" to the attic room. And thus it was that Lescaut entered unannounced.

Manon paused in arranging her flowers on the table and looked up with a smile to welcome Fabien, but when she saw her hateful brother the joy faded from her pretty face and she was transfixed with terror.

"The very sight of me renders you speechless with joy, eh, Manon?" inquired Lescaut, very much amused at her fear.

"What do you want?" Manon managed to ask through dry lips.

"You, of course!" Then as he saw her recoil from him he added impatiently: "Oh, come now, be sensible. You've led me a merry chase—but you won't escape me again."

"I won't go with you." Manon's eyes were wide with terror but she was, nevertheless, defiant.

"Not that tone with me, young lady, you

have exhausted my patience too long as it is!" Lescaut scowled threateningly and pushed her toward the door, in a rougher manner than Manon had ever experienced.

With a cry that expressed both mental and physical hurt, she wrenched herself free and put the table between them. "André, Fabien and I love each other! If you try to separate us I will kill myself," she cried passionately.

Before Lescaut had time to reply they both heard a man coming up the stairs. Manon's eyes brightened with relief.

"That is Fabien coming back!" she said. "Go quickly or he will turn you over to the police."

Not since Lescaut last sat at the gaming table had he thought so hard and fast. Holding Manon away from the door he said, sharply, "Des Grieux knows better than to call the police; they are after him for abducting you!"

"No—no!" With both hands outstretched as if to ward off a blow, Manon's eyes implored her brother to tell her that this was not true.

Lescaut grew triumphant. At last his argument seemed to affect her. "So—I see.

You don't care about yourself, eh? It is just that blessed man of yours that seems to worry you. Well, here he is," whispered Lescaut as the footsteps drew nearer. "Not a word about my being here or there will be trouble."

With this last threat, Lescaut disappeared behind a long alcove curtain, just as a man's knock sounded on the door.

A Warner Bros. Production *When A Man Loves.*

"PARIS IS HER PROPER SETTING—AS ONE OF AMPLE MEANS, MAY I SUGGEST—?"

CHAPTER VII

MANON HAS ANOTHER CALLER

It surprised Manon that Fabien should knock. He never had before. It was probably a new idea of his to surprise her. She longed to rush out and welcome him with open arms, but was so shaken with nervousness, as a result of the interview with Lescaut, that she could not move.

Torn between dread and indecision she called, faintly, "Come in."

The door was opened slowly, but instead of Fabien a strange man stood there eying her inquiringly.

"You were looking for some one, Monsieur?" questioned Manon in bewilderment. She had never seen the man before.

"Yes, I am looking for my good friend Des Grieux—perhaps it is just as well that I speak with you instead." Jean Tiberge softly closed the door and advanced toward Manon. "My task is not easy for I see that you are just a child." He smiled sadly.

"Non, Monsieur, I am seventeen!" Un-

der the kindly eyes and quiet manner that belonged to Tiberge, Manon's nervousness was fast leaving her. She thought how lovely it was to have Fabien's friends call; if only Lescaut and his threats could be forgotten.

Manon saw the curtain move—her brother was listening!

"Monsieur, won't you sit here," she said hastily, designating a chair with its back to the alcove. "Fabien will return very shortly."

"I have not come on a pleasure call." Tiberge accepted the chair, but continued eying Manon compassionately. "Mademoiselle, do you realize what a chaos you are making of the Chevalier's life?"

"What do you mean, Monsieur? We love each other, and we are quite—quite happy . . ."

Tiberge drew in his breath quickly, "You are married then, you and he?"

With wide innocent eyes looking at him wonderingly Manon shook her head, negatively.

"Then it may not be too late to save him from all of this." Tiberge's relief was evident.

Lescaut listened attentively from his hiding place. He was perplexed about the unknown caller but became greatly impressed as he realized that the man was playing right into his hand.

"Monsieur, why must you interfere?" inquired Manon. "Fabien told me just this morning that he had never been so happy in his life before."

"Momentary forgetfulness, such as Fabien is experiencing, is not good for a man's soul, my child." The cruelty of Tiberge's words was softened somewhat by his spiritual expression. "I will be brutally frank with you. For Fabien's sake you must leave him."

"I will never do that! He would not want me to," protested Manon stormily.

"The truth is harsh," continued Tiberge with convincing simplicity, "Yet this you must know—you have robbed Fabien of his parents, his career and his God. In exchange for these—what pitiful thing have you given him?"

"I have given him my heart—my whole heart," her lips trembled piteously and she cried in spite of herself as she continued, "all, all of it."

"Yes, that is true, but what of the day when he awakens from this dream of the flesh and weighs your love against all that it has cost him?" continued Tiberge, mercilessly.

With a piteous cry Manon buried her head in her arms and sobbed.

Quick to take advantage of a point gained, Tiberge went over to Manon and placed a kindly hand on her shoulder. He had promised the elder Des Grieux to locate Fabien and bring him home. But at that time he had not pictured Manon as such an appealing child and his duty became harder to perform when he saw her, crushed and heartbroken at his prediction of Fabien's future.

"If you love him, as you say you do, you will leave and never see him again." More shaken than he cared to admit, Tiberge turned toward the door and silently departed.

Manon's heart was too filled with tears and her mind too confused by this sudden turn of events for her to reply. Shaken with sobs, she rocked piteously back and forth, not knowing what to do. What should she do? Did Fabien's friend tell the truth

about ruining his life? It was all such a cruel nightmare in the midst of their happiness that it seemed unreal. Manon wiped the tears from her streaming eyes and, as she saw Lescaut swagger out from his hiding place with a hateful air of "I told you so!" she could not restrain a shudder.

Under pressure of this new worry, Manon had forgotten all about her brother being there. She implored piteously, "André, won't you please go and leave me alone?"

"No, you heard what he said—do you want to ruin Des Grieux's life as well as play the deuce with your own prospects?" Lescaut said this simply for effect. What he really meant was that if she continued playing the fool he would be left with an empty purse, whereas if he turned her over to the Comte his pockets would be filled to overflowing. "Come on, get your bonnet," he continued impatiently, "We want to be well out of here before Fabien returns."

"I *must* see him." Manon was praying that Fabien would come back and not let her go.

"It will mean prison for him if the police chance to find you here."

It was this terrible thought that decided

Manon. Fabien should not suffer through her! She would go away and return after the danger had passed. Fabien would understand that it was just a temporary arrangement.

"I will go with you," announced Manon resolutely. "But I must leave a note for Fabien." Brushing away her tears she sat down at the little desk.

Marie startled them both at this point by bursting into the room. She explained that after much arguing she had persuaded the jeweler to retrade the locket for Fabien's buckles. Marie was awed by Lescaut's silken presence, and after giving Manon the package she stood around, waiting to find out what was happening.

"DARLING": Manon wrote,
"André says that the police will arrest you unless I leave here for a little while. It will mean an absence of only a day or so—sweetheart—you are not to imagine that I am going away forever.

Good-by,
MANON.

P.S. Here are your buckles—a little farewell present."

While Manon penned the note Lescaut emptied the wall pegs of her simple little dresses and hastily stuffed them into her box. He was fearful that Fabien would return before they got away. Yet in spite of the risk he must take time to read Manon's parting message. An opportunity offered itself as Manon bade Marie a tearful good-by.

"Look after Fifi!" she said, "And tell Fabien I will be back soon . . ."

During the second that Manon's back was turned, Lescaut had read the note and maliciously torn off the first portion. What he left was complete and final—but not in the least the meaning Manon meant to convey to her lover.

Lescaut's experience as a gambler had trained him to look ahead to the next move, which is what he did now by surreptitiously slipping Marie a few gold pieces as Manon tearfully started for the door. His farewell to the serving girl was also characteristic; she might be as useful as an ace up his sleeve, he would keep her interest alive.

Just as the door closed Marie received her first kiss from a silk coated grandee. The fact that it was wafted to her from his

finger tips made it no less wonderful.

Life for Marie was becoming heavenly and it was all due to her Angel, Manon, who had gone away crying. Marie could not understand why parting from Fabien would bring forth a single tear. She hated him and decided to "fix things up" so that when he came back she could "watch him squirm" at the nice story she was going to make up about Manon.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DESERTED LOVE NEST

During the week of Fabien's earthborn happiness with Manon he had curtailed personal expenses to the extent of depriving himself of necessities so that he could buy a chain for her locket. He planned that it should be a first week anniversary present and felt as rich as a king when the frail silver necklace was safely stored away in his pocket.

Eager to delight his adored one with the surprise, Fabien hurried home. Had he not been so absorbed in his own dreams he would have seen Lescaut helping the tearful Manon into a coach before the pension door!

Was it Fate, or what, that made them pass each other so closely without knowing how near they were or anything of the other's need?

Fabien gayly climbed the stairs, three at a time, to their love nest and, filled with eager happiness, pulled the door wide and

shouted, "Manon, dear!" No answer. "Come out from your hiding place—I have something for you!" Still no answer.

Unwilling to wait, Fabien began looking about the room. The playful search came to a rigid halt when he saw the empty wall pegs. "Manon's clothes gone! Dear God, what has happened?" An awful fear gripped Fabien's heart. Like a blind man he groped about the room, still hoping against hope that he would find her. Presently his hand brushed something to the floor. His buckles! He looked at them in amazement and his heart almost stopped beating when he saw Manon's note. Without touching it he read from the torn paper:

Good-by,
MANON.

P.S. Here are your buckles—a little farewell present.

Fabien stared at the heartbreaking message so long that his eyes grew blurred and he could no longer see. Finally something within him seemed to snap. Galvanized into action, he opened the door, calling wildly for Marie.

She appeared, immediately, on the landing below and came up with a twisted, mocking smile on her face. Marie rejoiced in Fabien's anguish and had been waiting to see how he would act.

"Where is Manon?" Fabien's face was white, his eyes bloodshot.

"Gone, likely, with the rich gentleman who called for her." Marie's eyes were crafty and she delighted in her reply.

"You lie!" came from Fabien through set jaw.

His face was livid and Marie ducked out of reach from upraised arms that threatened to strike her to the floor.

Gradually Fabien's awful rage ebbed away, leaving him weak and dazed. He was so pitifully young and deeply in love with Manon that Marie's implication had made him see red. Still he dared not recall the content of that note. It seemed impossible to Fabien that Manon had been unfaithful. He adored her, and had she not given sufficient proof of her love? She had hardly been out of his sight since their arrival in Paris—how could she know another man? In a flash Fabien was convinced that the Comte had discovered Manon's whereabouts

and forced her to go away with him. Even this was a deathblow, because if true her fate would be unthinkable.

Fabien reread the note and was more distressed than ever. What a cruel message for Manon to leave! There was no doubt about it being her own writing. Apparently she had grown tired of him and their poverty. No, no, she had too recently lavished her caresses upon him for that to be true. Yet, the reality of her note remained to taunt him. Fabien paced the floor as though bereft of all reason.

He tossed the silver chain on the table beside his silver buckles. What a celebration to end their first week of love together!

Unable to endure the solitary loneliness of their once happy abode, Fabien strode from the room and slammed the door.

The love nest was deserted.

Would the world prove a kind place for the young ones who had gone forth so poorly prepared to meet the adventure and problems that awaited them?

Only time could tell!

CHAPTER IX

MANON IS TRAPPED

When Lescaut finally succeeded in getting Manon out of the pension he welcomed the sight of a coach and quickly shoved her within its seclusion as Fabien passed by. It was a narrow escape; besides Manon's protestations and tears were embarrassing and he did not want to attract attention. Also, he had to prepare her mind for what was to follow and he could not do it walking along the street.

"How silly to regret leaving a hovel like that! Dry your eyes and be ready to see the beautiful place I am taking you to. I have come into a little money and am living so handsomely that I want my little sister to share it with me." Lescaut spoke consolingly but he did not dare explain that the handsome home he referred to was the Comte's quarters and the money had been advanced by the amorous banker at the promise of Manon's deliverance into his hands.

When they arrived at the great mansion, Manon was so impressed with its splendor that for a few moments she forgot all about her unceremonious farewell from Fabien. Never had she imagined there was so much wealth in the world. There seemed to be a cohort of liveried servants passing here and there through the great marble halls.

Manon thought that it was fortunate for her brother to have inherited or acquired so much money. She did not stop to think just where it came from or that such sudden affluence was impossible. Her mind was again on Fabien and she thought how happy they would be in a place like this. Manon was terribly hurt and angry that André was selfish enough not to include him.

The boudoir that proved to be hers was a dream of loveliness. Tall mirrors about the walls told her that she was very out of place, in her crude wash dress, amid so much silken elegance. It added to her loneliness and sinking down on the chaise longue she buried her head among the soft silk pillows and cried.

It was here that the Comte found her when he tiptoed into the room, impa-

tient to claim his prize without further delay.

Brought to a consciousness of present surroundings by the Comte's devouring gaze, Manon lifted her head from the pillows. When she saw who was there she sat bolt upright with terror and covered her mouth to keep from screaming.

"Welcome, my pretty little bird, to the nest I have prepared for you," said the Comte as his hand reached out and cupped Manon's chin.

"Don't!" she shuddered, striking his hand away and springing to her feet.

"Perhaps you like this better," and the Comte's arm went over Manon's shoulder, down her back and around her waist as he stepped closer.

With a heartrending cry Manon pulled away and retreated to a far corner of the room.

The arrival of Lescaut, attracted by her screams, only added to her hysteria. "You have told terrible lies to get me here. You are beasts—both of you! My own brother has tricked me!" Manon's hands went up to her eyes, to wipe away the blinding tears, and when she took them away she saw the

Comte approaching, nearer and nearer, with that same terrible devouring expression on his face.

"Let me alone!" she cried pleadingly.

"Why should I? Don't you know that I have paid for you?" The Comte watched her greedily as he advanced.

Unable to stand the proximity of either man for another moment, Manon dodged away from the Comte and picking up her skirts ran out on to the balcony. Without a moment's hesitation she jumped over the low railing and raced across the lawn. Her only plan was to return to the comfort and happiness of Fabien's arms.

It was dark nighttime when Manon reached the pension. Fear of being pursued and caught had prompted a cautious trip along unfrequented streets, so that when she reached their attic room and opened the door she almost collapsed with fatigue and anxiety.

A great flood of moonlight coming in through the dormer window showed Manon that Fabien was not waiting for her. She looked about hopelessly and called his name again and again.

Aroused from a long quiet sleep by the

A Warner Bros. Production. *When A Man Loves.*

"WHAT LUCK, MY DEAR, THE RICH DE MORFORTAINE IS MAD ABOUT YOU."

sound of her mistress' voice Fifi climbed out of her basket and demanded recognition. Manon happily gathered the little pet in her arms.

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Sick at heart over Manon's departure, Fabien walked the streets. Finally he was drawn back to the pension in the hope that she had returned. But looking up he saw their little windows all dark.

Should he go up there and wait for her? He started for the door, then stopped. It would be hopeless and a waste of time, besides he could not endure the room without her.

Fabien tragically turned away, little dreaming that at that very moment Manon was back in their love nest, calling his name, looking and longing for him with such a great need that it seems he should have known and gone to her, in spite of the deceiving darkness.

Why was it that Fate again drew the lovers near; but played with her power and their future by keeping them in cruel ignorance of each other?

Marie was making her nightly rounds when she chanced to notice the attic door

ajar, peering curiously in she was shocked to see Manon.

"What are you doing back here?" she asked.

"Oh, Marie, where is Fabien—I have come back to him."

For a moment Marie hesitated, then she replied convincingly, "That's a silly thing to do—he told me nothing on earth could drag him back."

Manon moaned tragically at this unexpected news.

"Don't be silly and cry. He was glad enough to find that you had gone," lied Marie.

In all justice to Marie, it is only right to say that in her ignorance of love she thought she was doing Manon a favor to help separate her from Fabien and sure poverty.

Manon was so crushed and heartbroken that she did not even move as Lescaut came puffing up the stairs. She heard him and understood that he had followed with the intention of taking her back.

A wink of understanding and a smile of glad welcome passed between Lescaut and Marie.

"Come on, Manon, dearie—go with the

pretty gentleman," she wheedled, eager to get mixed up in the affair and help Lescaut.

Manon's spirit was crushed but not killed. Looking dully at her brother she said distinctly, "I will not go back!"

"Do you want to sit here and starve while you wait for Des Grieux?" inquired Lescaut impatiently.

"He wouldn't let me," defended Manon loyally.

"You're a little fool—he will never show up here again."

Attracted by voices in the unpaid attic room, the landlady came stalking in. "So, you're back! You're bold ones—you and your young man, skipping off without paying your week's rent. I'll take it now." She held out her hand, threateningly.

"I do not have it just now—but you'll get it to-morrow. Please be patient until then," pleaded Manon.

"Patient nothing!" the landlady exploded disgustedly. "And what's more you ain't going to stay here to-night because the room's rented to another party."

Manon closed her eyes in dread and terror. What could she do? Where could she go?

Greatly amused at the little scene, Lescaut interposed, "Here is the rent, old lady." And he airily dropped a gold piece into her palm. Confident, now, that he had his way he pushed Manon roughly toward the door.

As he touched her she pulled away, "I have told you before—I am not going with you!"

"Oh, all right, then! Do you want to sleep in the street?"

"I want you to let me alone," cried Manon desperately.

"Very well, do as you please. I am through!" Lescaut bowed mockingly and went out. He felt that nothing could be gained at this time by insistence, and he knew enough of the world to feel that sooner or later Manon would be forced to do as he dictated. In the meantime he planned to keep a stealthy eye on her movements. It amounted to the same thing as watching one's money bags.

CHAPTER X

A NIGHT OF HORROR

MANON wandered out into the night, more alone than ever. The darkness was bewildering and she had no idea where to go. An arched passageway, seemingly deserted, offered momentary shelter. With pounding heart she sought its seclusion and leaned against the wall, to collect her thoughts.

When her eyes became accustomed to the darkness she recoiled in panic. The pasty face of a hawk-eyed apache was leering at her from the opposite wall!

He also was seeking shelter, but glad enough to have such sweet company thrust upon him.

Manon's knees collapsed and she sank in a terrified heap on the cold stones. Too frightened to move, her horror mounted when the repulsive creature crawled forward and pressed his ghostly face against her shaking arm. Summoning every ounce of strength Manon whirled quickly about on hands and knees and regained her feet just

in time to escape two long arms reaching up to pull her down. With a terrified cry and throbbing temples, Manon sought the lighted streets and any safety they might afford.

Almost hysterical with fright she stumbled along, fighting with herself to keep down the sobs. The lights from a cheap café seemed to signal a safe resting place and she eagerly sought their brilliance.

A huge, heavy set man with brutal features came along the street and watched Manon with interest. His day's work being over he was in the mood to find diversion with a pretty girl. Manon was the best looking one he had ever seen. Walking close to her, he paused. "Hello, dearie!" he said. "Looking for me?"

A quick glance at the coarse featured brute and Manon was galvanized into action; but before she had taken two steps big rough hands reached out and grabbed her arms.

With a strength born of terror the harassed girl tore herself free and darted down the alleyway, leading to the inside café door.

The pleasure-seeking laborer knew that she could not escape, and with a satisfied

laugh he lumbered along in her wake.

Manon tripped and fell. Before she could get up a derisive laugh rang in her ears. Half fainting with terror, she was conscious enough to struggle and beat her small fists madly against the brute's face as he carried her through the back door of the dowdy café.

Although the place was well filled no one gave them more than a casual glance. Such scenes were customary in that den of iniquity where the down-and-outers or those who did not care came to carouse or plot future crimes. Everything but a sense of decency was given free reign.

Kicking and screaming, Manon was carried through the open center room into one of the high walled private stalls that surrounded it.

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Fabien could not tell why he loved Manon so deeply and to the exclusion of all else. No matter what happened she was his very life and he could not believe that she had been untrue to their love. After the first revulsion of feeling had passed, following her mysterious departure, he knew that he would have no peace of mind until she was

found. So, after leaving their deserted room, Fabien plodded his weary way along the streets, lanes and byways of Paris, searching every face and shadow for his beloved Manon.

After miles of fruitless wandering the buoyancy left his stride. He needed food, but that want did not compare with the hunger in his heart and the distress that diffused his soul.

Fabien could have returned to his father and affluence, but his deep love for Manon made him prefer an obscure and vagabond existence to all the advantages of fortune without her. He was sure that when he found her there would be a satisfactory explanation and their continued happiness together would follow.

The necessity for rest, coupled with an exhausting hunger, drew Fabien into a cheap café that he thought would suit the flatness of his money pockets. His search for Manon was temporarily abandoned. "She would never come to a place like this," thought Fabien, "a drinking hut frequented by blowsy women and calloused criminals." With a revulsion of feeling at the easy familiarity displayed among the sprawling

men and women, he moved through the open center door up to the bar, in an alcove at the end, and ordered a drink of brandy. He swallowed it at a gulp. It was the first strong drink he had ever taken—it burned his throat and made him choke, but it satisfied and promised the desired forgetfulness. He took another.

Fabien had abandoned his search and dulled his senses at the wrong time; because it was into this same café that Manon's abductor had carried her only a few moments earlier.

Only a thin partition and a few feet of space separated Fabien from Manon and her tormentor. He even heard the man's coarse laugh and a girl's scream. He had never heard Manon scream and she was so terrified that there was no familiar ring in her voice, however; it was a call for help, and Fabien rose to his feet. Dazed from his first bout with brandy, he staggered crazily and the landlord forced him into a seat.

"What you want to butt in for?" he growled.

"A lady in distress—" explained Fabien feebly.

"Lady, my eye—she come in here with him, didn't she?"

Fabien did not know. But on second thought he decided it did not matter. He could see several women, from where he sat, and they were all carousing noisily with their male companions. It seemed to be the usual thing. The spark of chivalry faded from Fabien's eyes and he reached for another drink! "God, I wish I could find Manon!" His head went down on his arms and he cried real tears from exhaustion and worry.

* * * * * * *

Up in the attic room when Lescaut had promised to keep an eye on his rebellious sister he was not making an idle threat. She was too valuable to become lost or stolen again. Thus it was that, unknown to Manon, Lescaut lurked in the shadows when she started out alone from the pension and he followed at a safe distance. He wanted her to get a taste of being alone on the streets of Paris. According to his idea it would be the best thing in the world to put her in the proper state of receptiveness to his plans. But Lescaut had no idea of permitting Manon to become soiled by her con-

tact with sordid reality—the Comte preferred her as she was, not as she might become if left on the loose without funds and a protector.

Lescaut saw Manon carried into the café, but he waited just long enough for her to appreciate his interference before making an appearance.

His entrance was most timely. Manon's strength had given way and the bully's loose lips were within an inch of her own when Lescaut roughly took him by the arm and spun him around. Surprised at this interference the man cursed loudly and made known his willingness to fight it out.

A purse of jingling gold louis was forced into his fist as Lescaut explained, "I would appreciate your generosity in giving her up. She happens to be my sister and I must take her home."

Mollified by the gold and its promised pleasures the man relinquished his tempting prey.

Almost dead from fright, Manon clung to Lescaut for protection and support. It seemed that the experiences of the last few hours must have been a nightmare and, although Manon knew they were not, she could

hardly wait to get out of that horrible café.

Realizing that she no longer made any resistance about going with him, Lescaut led her triumphantly through the center room toward the outside door.

They passed a man with his head buried on outstretched arms, but they did not look in his direction; if they had, Manon would have recognized Fabien. No explanations would have been necessary and she would have remained with him, even in that terrible place, rather than accompany Lescaut to the Comte's gorgeous mansion.

It seems strange and wrong that when two people loved as truly as Fabien and Manon that their lives should be wrecked and miserable as a result of their passion.

Fabien stayed at the lonely table until his dazed condition had been absorbed in sleep.

When he went out into the early morning his pockets were empty. But he was saved the anguish of knowing that Manon had been very near to him during the night and was by now, very much against her will, established as the Comte de Ravoir's pampered mistress.

CHAPTER XI

WHY DO MEN LOVE?

Days and days of weary searching brought no trace of Manon.

It was impossible for Fabien to concentrate on anything until she had been found. He could not return to his father and hear Manon slandered, and he was in no mood to resume his studies. Love had so engulfed his mind and heart that he had surrendered himself to its resulting misery and declined every avenue of escape.

Tiberge was his one friend and support, without whose many voluntary loans Fabien would have starved. His courage was kept up only by the belief that Manon was true and trying as hard to find him as he was to locate her.

The passing weeks brought a change in his former neat appearance. His clothes grew shabby and he did not care. He knew that as soon as he found Manon his interest and ambition would be refired and he would enjoy the best life offered.

Tiberge never mentioned the call he made on Manon, yet he sensed that in some way it influenced her departure and as time passed and he saw how deeply and seriously Fabien was affected, he regretted the part he had played—not in their separation, for he felt that was right—but in his friend's sorrow and broken spirit. He had never realized that love could work such havoc with a man's life.

A desire to justify his own stand, and perhaps bring Fabien to his senses, made Tiberge begin a personal search for Manon.

He was successful in locating her. Discovering the kind of life she was leading gave him complete vindication in the matter. He was right about her being the wrong type of woman for Fabien. Tiberge hurried to relate the news because he was sure that Fabien's interest and anguish would cease when he knew the truth, then he would be willing to return to his father and his calling.

They were walking along the Boulevard together when Tiberge said, "Heartache is a bitter thing to endure alone. We who love you have a right to share it—come back!"

"I shall never leave Paris until I have

found Manon," replied Fabien tonelessly.

Now was Tiberge's chance, "But Manon is lost to you. She has placed herself under the protection of the Comte de Ravoir." He carefully studied Fabien's face and felt sorry for him.

"Damn you! Do you think I believe that lie?" Fabien's eyes blazed and his fists were clenched.

"My friend—it is the truth! I want only to help you." Tiberge spoke soothingly but it was useless.

Fabien quickened his stride and left Tiberge behind as though he no longer desired his society. However, he had not gone more than a few paces when he stopped dead in his tracks and peered tragically into a carriage that was passing by.

It was a beautiful and expensive carriage, but he did not notice that. Neither was he conscious that his gaiters and clothes were being spattered with mud from the wheels. All he saw was—Manon! His beautiful Manon! Still beautiful—more lovely than when he last saw her—but no longer his! This was too evident by her luxurious attire and magnificent jewels.

"Manon!—Manon!" Fabien called her

name from the depths of his starved soul, but the carriage passed on down the Boulevard and Manon had not even glanced in his direction.

He started blindly to follow and was gently restrained by Tiberge, "Don't, my friend, it would do no good," he said, pityingly.

"I won't believe it. It can't be true!" his whole face was convulsed with grief.

"Then you must be convinced. Take advantage of your father's credit—visit your tailor and go to-night to Frascati's—you will see Manon with your own eyes. I am told that she and the Comte are favored patrons at the Club."

"I will. And after I have talked with her, I will prove that you are mistaken."

For the first time in weeks Fabien's voice lost its dullness. He was to see Manon again!

* * * * * * *

The remainder of the afternoon was profitably spent with his father's tailor. Fabien's wardrobe was entirely depleted and it was necessary to be fitted out from shoes to a becoming, wavy white wig. The best of everything was demanded. Fabien wanted

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"THANK YOU, MONSIEUR, I DO NEED A FRIEND."

Manon to see him in a different light than their poverty-stricken week had permitted. The result was that no young man had ever appeared to better advantage; at least as far as an observer could judge.

However, Fabien's confidence in himself vanished every time the vision of Manon, so gorgeously attired, flashed across his memory. These were torturing thoughts that caused Fabien's heart to sink until the agony almost engulfed him. Had the Comte won her affections and why had she gone to him?

During all the weeks of lonely searching, Fabien had not for a moment considered the possibility of Manon's faith in him being shaken. Nor did it occur to his weary brain that she might have been influenced to depart with some mistaken idea of benefiting him.

Fabien was so impatient to see Manon that the early hours of evening dragged into an eternity. The result was that long before the Frascati was in full swing Fabien arrived. It was his debut to the gambling clubs of Paris.

As he descended the wide marble staircase his slender figure, so elegantly attired

in rich black velvet and priceless lace frills, formed a flattering contrast with the light, gayly colored costumes of the players.

Fabien's face was pale. He wound among the tables, slowly, searching for Manon. He was oblivious to everything until he realized that it was too early for the real habitues of the place. He must wait still longer.

Gradually he awakened to the beauty of the great room. Dazzling crystal chandeliers reflected the sparkle from hundreds of burning candles and cast a brilliant glow upon the white-wigged people and the jeweled women. Liveried servants kept the beakers filled with rich cherry colored wine. And at various gaming tables men and women were playing escaret, roulette and baccarat while others stood about watching or waiting for an inspiration before placing their money.

At one of these tables stood Nana, a well-known figure in the night life of Paris. Her years—one could not guess just how many—had carried her through a whirlwind of emotional experiences and prepared her to cope with any situation that might arise as the result of her adventuresome career. She was sexually passionate and enthusiastic

about anything that according to her code promised profitable returns.

Nana was one of the first in the room to notice Fabien. Always alert for a new victim she sensed in this sad eyed, handsomely attired gentleman a youth who appeared capable of gratifying her senses and filling her purse.

As Fabien strolled curiously toward the roulette table, Nana made room for him at her side. He accepted the space and piqued her pride by not answering the bold challenge in her eyes.

The truth of the matter was that he was not even aware of her presence. Fabien belonged to that very rare class of a one woman man. Not even the wiles and arts of Nana could for a moment make him forget Manon. The immodest lure of this woman might ensnare many men but Fabien's love made him immune to her artful wiles.

Nana misjudged him. He appeared too young to have experienced a passion so memorable that other loves promised nothing in comparison. It was characteristic of Nana to think a bit ahead and make plans for the latter part of the night while the

field of selection was as yet untouched by other hunters.

Leaning toward Fabien she pressed against him with her bared shoulder, smiled invitingly into his eyes and turned the soft part of her arm toward him as if urging an embrace.

Diverted for the moment from observing the spinning roulette wheel, Fabien turned to see if he was in anyone's way. Nana caught and held his glance. Hard kisses trembled on an even harder mouth. Fabien saw and was not tempted. With as polite a bow as his disgust would permit he stepped away from Nana as if to give her more room, then circling the table he availed himself of the first vacant place and again intently watched the wheel.

For the first time in years the color mounted to Nana's cheeks; but it was not a flush of modest beauty—that would have been impossible for Nana—it was a flash of furious anger. She watched Fabien through narrowed lids that trembled until bits of heavy cosmetic fell from her lashes, her smiling lips concealed set teeth and a resolve to "make that infant suffer" for his insult, or so Nana termed his indifference.

Noticing Fabien's intentness the croupier said, politely, "Try your luck, M'sieur, by betting on the age of your sweetheart."

Fabien hesitated, a bitter smile on his face. Then he reached in his pocket and taking out a couple of louis balanced them meditatively in the palm of his hand for a moment before tossing them on the table as he said, "Eighteen."

"Eighteen! That is divinely young." This came from an elderly gentleman who had been Nana's companion on several occasions in the past.

Nana heard and it did not serve to lessen her anger. The thought of a girl of eighteen succeeding where she had failed was a bitter dose.

Fabien did not hear the gentleman's comment, he did not even pay any attention to the little white ball or the revolving wheel, because once more he was watching the great entrance doors for Manon's arrival.

"Eighteen," continued the elderly gentleman, "That must be about Manon's age—although she looks even younger."

Fabien heard this with a quick intake of breath and continued to listen as Nana spoke.

"You men—all of you around here are very tiresome. Ever since meeting Manon you can see nothing to admire in a woman but youth!"

If Nana had known that she was literally thrusting daggers into Fabien's heart, she would have felt a bit compensated for her age.

The little white ball stopped at—eighteen! Still Fabien remained like a statue. He had lost interest in the game since hearing Manon's name bandied about in that public place.

As the croupier raked the winnings toward Fabien, murmurs of congratulation came from various people about the table.

Reluctant to let so much money get out of the house, the croupier suggested, "Would M'sieur like to play again, on the same lucky number, perhaps?"

"Yes." Fabien managed to reply with great effort. Not that he cared to play, but it was the quickest way to end the situation. The money would be lost and he would not have to pick it up and store it in his pockets.

Fabien was bored. The pleasant anticipation of seeing Manon had been crushed and he was more heartsick than ever before.

The continued conversation about Manon fascinated him, in a strange way, and he listened while a woman whose love for jewels was very apparent said:

"I wonder if the old cabbage will buy Manon that Kasha emerald she has set her heart on?"

Nana replied cattily, "Trust her! If she works that baby stare on De Ravoir he will go out and buy her the left bank of the Seine!"

Fabien's face grew ghastlier with each word that Nana uttered and it was a great effort for him to refrain from choking her.

Too bad that Nana did not know how cruelly she was hurting the youth she had sworn to torture. But she did not think of a possible connection between Manon and the stranger and, therefore, did not have the satisfaction of witnessing his discomfiture.

Again the ball stopped at eighteen. This time Fabien mechanically stacked the gold on the table and filled his pockets, but he had lost all desire for money as Manon would not share it with him. Eager to get away from the gossiping women who were slandering Manon's name, Fabien turned away, disgusted with the whole beastly place

and life in general. But he had not taken a step before the great entrance doors at the head of the stairs were opened and he saw—Manon! Manon, standing alone, framed in the enormous arched entrance. She was so divinely beautiful that Fabien could not still the rising tumult in his heart. It seemed ages since he had seen her and with every fiber of his being he longed to rush forward and take her in his arms. Even at the distance that separated them her beauty appeared more radiantly sweet and adorably feminine than ever before.

The sight of Manon's exquisite presence had blotted from Fabien's mind the current rumors defaming her character. He stood as one before a deity, his hungry heart taking new life from her very presence. Suddenly his whole attitude changed. His hands clenched and the happiness faded from his face leaving it white and tense with cruel drawn lines that made him appear ten years older. The Comte de Ravoir had appeared at her side. She had been waiting for him.

CHAPTER XII

THE INSULT

WHISPERS announcing Manon's arrival spread through the room like a breeze; the kind that was ill for the women and good for the men; for Manon had become the idol of Paris night life. Her incomparable beauty, so youthful and charming, had captivated the hearts of all men who beheld her and she had unconsciously set a style for envious women who tried in vain to make themselves as attractive.

Practically every eye in the room focused on Manon and the Comte as they moved down the stairs. She was gowned in lustrous black velvet, very décolleté, leaving room on her neck and arms for a fortune in glittering jewels.

Nana noted with a jealous pang that the Comte *had* given her the famous emerald pendant.

Conscious that they were the center of attention the Comte glowed with pride and drew Manon's arm closer as he patted her

hand with an air of proprietorship, as if to say, "This is my property."

Sharp swords piercing his body could not have caused Fabien greater pain than this incident with its accompanying realization. It transformed him from a youth to a broken-hearted man. However, his outward composure was admirable and with perfect poise he slowly advanced to meet Manon, never taking his burning eyes from her face.

Smiling an acknowledgment to a friend's salutation Manon turned and saw her young lover. Her face lighted up with a glad welcome as she impulsively held out both hands in eager greeting and whispered, "Fabien."

With a suave bow and a bitter mocking smile, Fabien ignored her hands and said, "Allow me to compliment you, Mademoiselle, on your taste in jewels."

Manon's flush of pleasure vanished with his mocking tone and odd behavior. "Fabien!" she said again, this time with trembling lips.

"I could never have afforded emeralds," he continued mercilessly, "You were wise to discard me quickly and exert your arts on richer men."

Hurt beyond belief the tears flooded Manon's eyes, yet she looked at Fabien tenderly, searchingly, to see if he had lost his mind.

The Comte glared threateningly and the crowd buzzed its excitement. Nana had never had such a surprise, although it is only just to admit that her estimation of Fabien rose rather than fell as she sensed the situation in its entirety.

After a moment's hesitation the Comte advanced with as threatening a mien as he could muster, but after two steps he cowered before Fabien's deadly gaze.

The buzz of excitement rose in volume until the room was filled. The people could not remember a more sensational incident and the women enjoyed it to the utmost, especially Nana and others of her kind.

The Comte crouched behind Manon like a frightened hound, at the same time attempting to preserve his dignity. His eyes were as roving as his thoughts and he was distressed about the incident, not for Manon's sake as much as for his own.

Fabien took in every detail of Manon's attire, concentrating for a moment on the priceless emerald pendant which hung just

between her white breasts. Fabien thought of how quickly she had forgotten his locket and the fact that her breast had been a sacred resting place for his head.

Manon had wanted Fabien so terribly during her enforced life with the Comte that she felt he must have wanted her too. She had given him up to save him from ruin. It was a sacrifice that nearly broke her heart, and this was the way he treated her after all those torturing days following their separation. It must be that he did not quite understand! With this hope in mind, Manon reached out to touch him with a pleading, piteous expression on her face. Then she saw Fabien recoil. He did not want to come in contact with her! A quick cry of anguish rose to Manon's lips and she pressed her jeweled fingers to her throat in an effort to suppress it.

Fabien's self-control snapped with the destruction of his dream. "The clink of a gold piece is louder in your ears than a loyal heart," he said, scathingly, "Is it not, Manon? You prefer gold—here it is!" and as he spoke he threw handfuls of gold pieces in her face, against her body and at her feet,

all the gold he had won on her age at the table.

The Comte cursed angrily. The crowd was stunned with amazement, although no one made a move to do anything as Fabien's fury dominated the scene. Poor Manon stood with bowed head, crushed and humiliated beyond belief. Her hands covered her burning face but could not suppress the heart-broken sob that forced its way through her lips.

Having finished with Manon, Fabien turned his attention to the Comte and said, with derision, "Monsieur, your success with Manon will depend upon the size of your fortune; you have nothing else to commend you." He waited mockingly for the Comte to take offense at the insult. To his surprise the invited attack was ignored.

The Comte had long since cultivated the habit of suppressing his anger and saving his energies for pleasure rather than combat, it was far more gratifying.

"I see that Monsieur is not even man enough to defend his lady! I bid you both good-by." With a final significant look at Manon, Fabien bowed low and approached

the stairs with a deadly calm that struck terror to Manon's numbed heart.

The people watched his departure with breathless silence and not until the massive doors had closed behind him did the tension relax. Then everyone began talking at once, "What a night—What a situation. Now, Manon could not hold her head so high in that sweet, innocent way of hers. Now the men could not refer to her as such a paragon of all that a woman should be." Thus the women's tongues rattled on.

As for the men: some were decently sorry about the whole wretched affair, while others were encouraged to think that, now, they too might have a chance with Manon. They had thought her different, apparently she was not.

The Comte had never experienced such annoyance. Trembling with resentment, one could hardly call it by a stronger name, he guided Manon from the room. In a few short moments the pomp and splendor of their arrival had vanished, revealing not the idol of Paris with her wealthy and polished escort but two ordinary people stripped of all glamour and exposed to their friends

and enemies as a common woman and a cowardly man.

Nana's laugh of deep, amused and satisfied revenge was the last sound Manon heard as the great doors closed behind them.

After leaving the gambling room, Fabien calmly walked outside of the building and with studied deliberation tipped the doorman. He overcame the desire to collapse by tensing every muscle and forcing his legs to move.

Faithful Tiberge emerged from the shadows where he had been waiting ever since Fabien entered the Club. He knew that his friend would be disillusioned and greatly in need of a guiding hand before the night was over, and he had appointed himself for the task, knowing that it would be both difficult and thankless.

Sensing Fabien's anguish, Tiberge followed and gripped him tenderly by the shoulder. At the touch of a comforting hand Fabien's control gave way. All of his pent-up emotions broke loose and for a moment he rested against Tiberge, taking all the support that was offered.

"You are right," said Fabien simply. It

was a tortured admission that meant the end of all earthly happiness.

"No wonder he looks crucified!" thought Tiberge. Although he had never experienced Fabien's emotions or known a woman's love, he understood the pangs of sorrow and suffering and knew the welcome comfort that comes from silent sympathy.

The two men went down the street, arm in arm, thinking—each one in his own way but neither saying a word.

It was dawn before they turned in at Tiberge's lodgings to discuss the future.

CHAPTER XIII

FABIEN RETURNS TO THE PRIESTHOOD

In the south of France was, and probably still is, the great Château des Grieux where Fabien spent his early youth as the favored son of devoted parents.

It was a rather austere and well-ordered home radiating dignity and supreme respectability. From the time that Fabien was a boy soloist in the church choir it was planned that he should some day become a Priest. Consequently, it is easy to picture the sorrow and disgrace that descended upon his mother and father and brothers when word came that Fabien had forsaken his vows to live a life of shame with some unknown girl in Paris.

Tiberge was a lifelong friend of the family and went to them with the hope of assuaging their grief. "Your son is not lost to you, sir," he said. "Perhaps even now he repents of his boyish folly."

"Every ambition I had was centered on him," tonelessly replied the grief-stricken

father, "He has betrayed my faith and broken his mother's heart."

For a moment Tiberge stood with bowed head, then with face alight he continued, "But his natural piety will outlast this whim of the senses."

"I wonder—I wonder!" reflected the father.

"It is true, sir. You need worry no more about Fabien. He has at last given up all thought of Manon, and is entering St. Sulpice to resume his studies for the Priesthood."

A wonderful sense of peace and relief spread over the fine old gentleman's face. "Thank God," he said fervently. "When you return take him our love, our blessings and our forgiveness."

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When Tiberge delivered this message, the repentant son was deeply grateful and it lifted a great burden from his soul. He dearly loved his family and now that the harrowing incidents of the past few months were over, it was difficult to understand how he had been so able to completely forget and neglect them.

However, Fabien's resolve to reënter St.

Sulpice came only after a tremendous struggle to forget the Manon he loved and the perfidious woman he thought she had become. In the end it was Tiberge who persuaded him to renounce the pleasures of the world and enter into holy orders. The plan also suited Fabien's changed outlook on life. He imagined himself entirely safe from the dangers of love and honestly believed he had reached the stage in life where prayerful meditation was worth more than the gratification of his earthly appetites, even those he had enjoyed with Manon.

Fabien was determined to lead a holy and Christian life with the hours so divided between study and religion that there would be no leisure for the perilous pleasures of love. He was convinced that he had lost all esteem for Manon. Yet her image, with its exquisite features, was engraved on his very heart's core and would always remain uneffected. He was, also, positive that no other woman could tempt him because he detested them as a class and as individuals he did not care even to converse with another.

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For nearly a year now, Fabien had been

devoting himself to study. His peace of mind was restored. His past contact with love enabled him to understand many passages in the classics which had been previously obscure, and he looked upon the world with new eyes—eyes that saw in the beautiful influence of the Church another life extended into the years ahead. In this other life the memory of Manon would be consigned to eternal oblivion.

The time was drawing near for Fabien to take his public examinations in theology, and at such events it was customary for the names of students to be posted so that the public could attend if they were interested.

It happened that Manon saw Fabien's name in this connection and lost no time in availing herself of the opportunity to attend. Ladies were forced to sit in special seats behind a screen so that Fabien had no idea of her presence. Every day for a whole week she was there, watching and waiting, longing for a chance to see and speak with him privately. The examinations ended and Manon's wish remained ungratified. She knew that Fabien was to take his final vows on the following day, and as her whole future happiness depended upon seeing him

before that time she determined to throw convention to the winds and seek him out at the church. Her love was not dead, in fact it had matured until it was the only vital thing in her life. Manon had never been able to understand Fabien's cruelty to her that night at the Gambling Club. It seemed as though he should have appreciated that the situation her brother created was a million times harder for her to live than for him to think about. Yet he gave her contempt instead of compassion!

At the close of the service on the day before Fabien was to take his final vows, he knelt in prayer. A wonderful, spiritual expression transfigured his features. After a year of shattering conflict supreme peace was his and before another sun had set he was prepared to relinquish all worldly pleasures and become a Priest.

Rising from prayer with the little book in his hands he reverently passed the altar just as an altar boy snuffed out the last candle and went on his way. The church was deserted save for Fabien. The last rays from the setting sun streamed in through the tall stained glass windows and mingled their beauty with the mystery of

heavy incense and the deep stillness of the great auditorium.

On his way out Fabien paused before the image of Mary Magdalen. The beautiful features made a shadow fall across his serene face, because she reminded him of Manon. And why shouldn't she? Mary Magdalen had been forgiven by One far greater than he! Fabien closed his eyes in an effort to blot out both the image and the thought.

Advancing down the corridor he glimpsed a silhouette in the shadows and as he drew nearer, the figure came within the radiance of a window. Fabien stood as still as if a barrier had stopped his progress. It was Manon!

CHAPTER XIV

TEMPTATION

More bewitching than ever, Manon was enveloped in a long cloak with the hood covering her hair. She was tremulous, uncertain, even humble, yet still so young and dove-like that her beauty beggared all description.

Fabien was like one enchanted. He felt it must be some trickery—Manon, of all people in the world, alone with him in the church when he had given up all idea of ever seeing her again.

Unable to divine the purpose of her visit, he waited, trembling, not daring to look at her. For a moment her embarrassment was equal to his own, then she realized that he had no intention of breaking the silence and murmured tremulously, "Fabien."

Her appeal brought forth only a stern and set expression to his face. He did not even raise his eyes.

Manon continued, beseechingly: "I saw your name posted for examinations and at-

tended all week in the hope of seeing you. Fabien, dear, I *must* talk with you—my heart has been broken." The tears fell unheeded. "You are thinking unfair things of me. I could not help what I did. My brother and the Comte forced me into that hideous situation. I was powerless. They told me that you would be arrested for abduction and that I could save you only by leaving. But I went back to our room and was told that you never wanted to see me again. I have never ceased loving you."

Unwilling to hear more, Fabien turned away. Manon stopped her explanation and watched him with tragic eyes. His entire manner indicated that he was through with her. It was more than she could bear.

"Fabien!" The cry came from a broken heart.

As Manon took a step toward him her cloak fell back revealing her lovely neck and arms covered with jewels. On her white-wigged head reposed a diamond circlet that sparkled in rainbow colors, reflecting the setting sun as it streamed through the great stained glass window. Her white satin gown stood out vividly against the dark background of the cloister. There she stood, all

allure, her tempting lips parted appealingly, her charming figure revealed in all its slender perfection. The fresh fragrance of her personality, mingled with the subtle perfume from her hair and gown, affected Fabien like a stimulant and made his senses whirl madly, driving the pounding blood through his dormant veins.

Manon approached and Fabien watched her as though hypnotized, but when her hands stole up to his shoulders he awakened from his trance with a start and pushed her away.

"Wanton!" he cried scathingly. "You are as guilty as the hell you come from." His eyes blazed with a holy and righteous anger against this woman whose touch made him forget his duty and think only of the world, the flesh and her!

Manon remained motionless during his condemnation, but she sobbed in agony when he turned away and went out into the garden, like a saint madly fighting the devil.

Manon gathered up her cloak and followed. "I cannot blame you," she said simply, her eyes soft with love and adoration. "All you say of me is probably true—but I love you so!"

The words were like a lash across Fabien's face and he retaliated by demanding harshly: "What about your lover—the man who buys all these jewels and decks you in satin gowns?" He indicated her expensive attire with a gesture of disgust.

"I am no longer with him," she replied hopefully, then continued: "I hated him and left his house as soon as I could manage to escape—I have not even seen him for months."

"Then whom are you with now, to give you all these things?" Fabien was still contemptuous as he indicated her jewels.

"Fabien!" Manon was hurt and shocked. "No one, you should know that. The Comte had given them to me, so I took them away." When she saw the effect of her words she added regretfully, "I am sorry, Fabien, but I shall always love jewels and beautiful clothes."

Fabien realized the utter helplessness of the situation. She was not to blame after all. Neither was it wrong for a woman to crave pretty things. He found himself regretting that he had not been the one to lavish luxuries upon her!

"Fabien, why should we be unhappy all

the rest of our lives? We know that we were made only for each other and if you refuse me I shall die and you will never know a moment's peace." Manon was pleading for Fabien's love, to her the only worth-while thing in the world.

"Leave—I never want to see you again!" he said sternly.

"You don't mean that. You couldn't! You are being cruel to yourself and to me. I know you love me or I never would have come here to save us both from everlasting misery, Fabien!" With a little moan Manon clung to Fabien, pleading with her body as she had pleaded with her voice and heart. But when she felt no response she sank helplessly to the ground and leaned against his knees. She pressed close and reaching up grasped his arm with both hands and stroked it lovingly. "Please . . . dear . . . !" she implored.

Gradually Fabien relaxed. He could not muster sufficient courage to meet her eyes, but he knew she was there—he felt her presence! With clenched hands forced straight down at his sides he raised his face in prayer.

Looking up, Manon saw and understood

that she had not won him back. She fell in a crumpled heap at his feet. Her face was almost on the ground as she cried piteously, "You are my one friend; if you send me away, what will become of me?"

Unable to resist such a truly feminine appeal for protection, Fabien looked slowly upon her as she bowed there at his feet. With a start there came to him the resemblance between her attitude and that of the image of Mary Magdalen. His expression softened as he encountered the look of adoration and worship in her upturned face. Quick to take advantage of this first indication of relenting, Manon rose to her feet and loaded him with caresses. Her luminous eyes were half closed and her lips, slightly parted, longed for Fabien to take them.

"Manon, can you promise that you would never leave me again?" Fabien searched her eyes.

"Darling—I know—I swear it!" her eyes answered his.

The agitation and tumult that her nearness kindled in Fabien thrilled him with a kind of horror that made him experience the vague sense of being carried into a new existence.

That is exactly what was happening and it came about with such power that he could no longer resist the call. As Manon's fragrant nearness broke down his last spark of resistance, Fabien gathered her hungrily into his starved arms and strained her to him in a strong passionate embrace. His lips found hers and held them for a wonderful moment of complete forgetfulness.

The reunited lovers were called from themselves by the chiming bells in the great Cathedral tower.

"My dear, do you hear?" questioned Fabien happily. "Their ringing means my freedom, and yours!" He gathered Manon to him again for a brief ecstatic embrace, then removed his cassock and left it on the ground—the only part of him that was to remain within the narrow confines of the cloister walls.

To be together was all they asked, and since holding Manon in his arms Fabien had not had a moment's doubt about the wisdom of again relinquishing his vows for her.

They agreed that their present and future happiness was secure beyond the reach of Fate or the interference of man; and so with one arm about Manon's slim

shoulders Fabien led her out into the world.

Where? They neither knew nor cared. Just what awaited them did not matter so long as they had each other.

CHAPTER XV

A NEW BEGINNING

Love with all its resulting pleasures is a wonderful thing, but unfortunately cannot be enjoyed for very long without enough money to insure food and shelter.

Fabien's hasty and unpremeditated departure from St. Sulpice did not leave time to think of money, and when he wanted to return for his purse Manon would not consider it. She feared complications and dreaded the thought of losing him again even for a moment. Anyway, the contents of the purse would not have lasted long, for Fabien demanded nothing in the way of worldly goods while at St. Sulpice, and naturally his finances were never large. Now, however, money was as essential to their future as the food their bodies required.

Manon had salvaged enough from the odious but profitable days with the Comte de Ravoir to take care of them for some time. Of course she offered it immediately as a solution to their problem and was sur-

prised when Fabien rebelled at the abhorrent idea.

It took only a little explaining on Fabien's part to make her understand why they could not exist on the Comte's past generosity. Manon acceded to his wishes very graciously; in fact, nothing mattered now that they were together with the past all explained and buried away. She assigned herself unreservedly to Fabien's care and instinctively knew that in some way he would provide everything her heart desired.

Fabien was even more sure of this than Manon. He had lost her once because he was so absorbed in dreams of love that he ignored the material. Now he planned to provide for her even more lavishly than had the Comte, so that no odious comparison would ever make Manon unhappy or cause him to fall in her estimation as a man and provider.

The only means at hand was for Fabien to draw on his father and he did it with a heavy hand because he knew that after his parent had been notified a second call for funds would be refused.

To satisfy Manon's love for pleasure it seemed important that they should reside

A Warner Bros. Production. *When A Man Loves.*

MANON FREQUENTS A CERTAIN CLUB IN MONTMARTE.

in Paris. She found a beautiful place that she wanted, consequently Fabien took it and they established themselves in gorgeous style with utter disregard for expense; nor did they take time from love-making to plan where more money would come from when their dwindling supply was exhausted.

They were enjoying a dream, and money never matters in dreams; so why should they have worried? Besides, all dreams end soon enough. It is stupid to attempt control, just give yourself up completely to the temporary oblivion and make the best of the rude awakening.

The flying weeks added a new radiance to love. Manon grew so sweet in her unceasing attentions to Fabien that he felt fully rewarded for his past troubles and changed plans. Her passion for jewelry and beautiful gowns went hand in hand with her love for amusement and she soon discovered that Fabien gratified every whim. It made her love him more—if such a thing were possible.

Smart new friends became frequent visitors at the Des Grieux household. It happened that many of the same people who witnessed the dramatic scene between

Fabien and Manon at the Gambling Club, annexed themselves to the host of friends and admirers. Strangely enough, one of the most faithful from this group was Nana. It may have been because she found Manon's salon the best place in Paris to meet interesting men, but we will give her credit for a flare of real friendship and add for good measure that she no longer treasured a grudge against Fabien—instead she openly admired him and would have given her soul to hold the place in his affections that Manon occupied. She openly and secretly, when occasion permitted, angled for his attention and her efforts were so untiring that Fabien often had to make excuses to get away from her.

Manon's boudoir was lovely beyond compare. Paneled walls of soft rose-colored satin matched the exquisite hangings. All of her toilet articles were of crystal and gold, a gift from Fabien that made her lavish caresses on him for a whole hour. Abundant payment.

The bed was charming, but not more so than its occupant as the brightness from the midday sun filtered through the windows and shone brightly upon Manon as she sat

there, banked with silken pillows, enjoying her breakfast chocolate, while Fabien, who had been up for hours, came in to watch her.

"Your hair is so soft and lovely," said Fabien, tenderly patting the mass of golden ringlets spread out on the pillows around her head. "I like you much better this way than in formal wig. It reminds me of our first night in the attic room when I saw you asleep."

Fabien buried his face in Manon's curls and as her sweetness took possession of his senses he kissed her—many times—while she pillowed his head upon her breast and bowed her head in adorable submission.

A knock at the door warned them that it was time for Manon's day to begin. Late night hours made it advisable for her to remain abed until noon and Fabien always came in to waken her and remain until the maid arrived to draw her bath.

By the time the door opened, Fabien was way out in the middle of the room talking casually with Manon as she, just as casually, finished her chocolate. It was a little game of hoax they always enjoyed. Although it concealed nothing for the simple reason that the maid was—Marie—the wise gossip-

loving slavey from the pension. It had been another whim of Manon's to engage her as personal maid and costume her in all the neatness of a pretty uniform. Marie arose to the occasion grandly and watched over her adored mistress as jealously as a devoted watchdog. The new surroundings also gave her hungry soul a feast and she found the large servants' hall an amazing place for scandal.

"Messieurs the Abbé Martineau and the Duke D'Eaufort—Mademoiselle Nana—and the hairdressers are waiting to see Madam." Marie made her announcement very stiffly, while now and then she cast a grim look at Fabien. Now she did not like him because she was forced to change her opinion about his appearance and his wealth.

"Oh, Lord!" ejaculated Fabien. "You will have to pardon me, my dear. I will return when I do not have to share you with so many." Fabien hurried to Manon's side and kissed her finger tips gallantly.

"Wait!" she commanded gayly. "Help me up first." Fabien lifted her to the side of the great bed. "Thank you—no, don't go yet—my slippers next!" She extended bare, pink little feet and as Fabien fitted on

her satin slippers she bent over and kissed him provokingly on the forehead. Turning away with a laugh, before he could imprison her hands, she began struggling into a filmy negligee. Fabien came to the rescue and wrapped her lovely figure in its fragrant folds.

"Now, my lady, will you descend?" he inquired with mock dignity, offering his hand. Manon touched it gently with her finger tips and with exaggerated grace stepped from the dais to the floor—like a queen descending from her throne.

"Darling one kiss—" Manon stood on tiptoes with pursed lips. "—Yes—now you may go, but come back very soon!" She watched Fabien depart; then turning to the maid with a big happy sigh she said, "Marie, have them come in."

They came. A troupe of morning callers who sat about and chatted while the hairdressers prepared Manon for the festivities of the day.

The Abbé Martineau was a quaint little figure. Manon's beauty had inspired him to write verse and the first thing he did was to perch himself on the arm of a big chair, at one end of her dressing table, and indulge

in the pleasure of reading aloud while her coiffure was being arranged before his very eyes. It was just intimate enough to please him immeasurably. Pauses in his reading were due not so much to emotion as to intervals in which he sipped wine and times when others intruded for a moment of Manon's time.

Manon was charming and attentive, with the result that the little man came every day and remained long enough to read a new couplet and imbibe a glass of wine.

The Abbé's presence, on this particular morning, annoyed Nana excessively. She did not have any perfume that compared with Manon's and the special bottle she wanted was on the corner of the dressing table where the Abbé interfered with her getting it. In the meantime she glowered at the little man and consoled herself by smelling the contents of every other bottle she could get her hands on. When she found a scent that she liked a generous portion was immediately transferred to her fingers and then brushed across her lips.

"Do you like that odor, Nana?" inquired Manon, who had been watching her with amusement.

"Yes, it is most seductive—what do you call it?"

"Yours, if you want it," replied Manon generously.

"I couldn't think of it," protested Nana, but she had already decided to take the crystal and gold bottle as well as the rare perfume.

"That is all right, Nana; Fabien will buy more—he gives me everything I want."

"Yes, I have noticed—I don't see how you manage it," drawled Nana with mingled admiration and envy. "I have never owned as much jewelry as you have discarded."

Manon knew that Nana referred to the Comte de Ravoir's gifts, and it was annoying to have that episode of her life revived. Besides, she hated to have anyone think that Fabien had not done a great deal more for her.

Opening a dressing-table drawer, Manon took out a handsome velvet case and offered it for Nana's inspection. A priceless diamond pendant glittered handsomely from the rich velvet box.

"Isn't it darling?" she inquired proudly.

"It is more beautiful than the Comte's

ruby necklace." Nana's admiration was sincere.

"Fabien brought it to me last night." Manon lifted the jewel from the box and slipped the delicate chain over her head.

The hairdressers had just completed their pleasant duty and Manon's callers gathered about to inspect her new gift.

She made a lovely picture, sitting there before her mirror, so happy in her love, with her lover's latest extravagant gift sparkling from its resting place on her breast.

Unknown to everyone, Fabien was the most absorbed spectator of the little scene.

Since leaving Manon's boudoir he had wandered about the great house trying to settle upon some way to handle the pressing need for money. His father had disowned him. Tiberge was still friendly and compassionate, but his means were limited, and even if he gave up all he had it would not be sufficient to meet their extravagant mode of living. It did not occur to Fabien to live simply, because Manon's nature demanded luxuries and amusement and he felt that he should be man enough to provide them for her. Also, he loved her in the gay happy moods that were hers in the midst of their

present surroundings and some way, somehow, he was determined to provide all that her pleasure-loving nature craved.

Fabien had not settled on any definite financial plan when he recalled Manon's request to "come back very soon." He returned to her boudoir and chanced to arrive at the open door just as she was showing her necklace. Fabien remained outside, a look of comic dismay on his worried face.

A few days before Manon had described the jewel to him with such enthusiasm that he could not resist surprising her with it as a gift. No one knew better than he how ill he could afford the indulgence. But when he saw what a beautiful picture she made in its reflected glory he did not regret the extravagance. The incident only drove home the fact that he must raise money—a quantity of money—before many more days passed into eternity and carried him along in a hopeless maze of bills and insistent bailiffs.

Fabien did not join the admiring throng gathered about Manon. He was about to enter when a servant quietly approached and said: "Monsieur, there are two—

gentlemen—in the drawing-room who insist upon seeing Monsieur."

Fabien tried to put Manon out of his thoughts as he went downstairs to confront the two—gentlemen. He knew only too well who they were and what they wanted. Their presence in his home was not welcome and he dreaded the consequences of the enforced interview.

CHAPTER XVI

FABIEN BECOMES A GAMBLER

When Fabien entered the drawing-room he felt two pairs of piercing eyes centered upon him.

The humiliation and annoyance that had been his before entering the door changed to an air of amused nonchalance. The situation did have an amusing side. Why not play up to it and ignore the danger involved? At least it would be a new and refreshing way to receive the callers.

"Good afternoon, gentlemen," Fabien bowed politely as though they were distinguished guests. "I had not expected to have the pleasure of receiving you again so soon!"

The two men plainly showed their surprise at this unexpected greeting and as a result the things they had intended saying came out in unintelligible sputters. One of them began searching his pockets for a paper that it was his duty to serve. Fabien saw the

gesture and with an amused twinkle and deliberate misconstruction said:

"Won't you try some of mine?" offering his snuffbox. "Perhaps you left yours at home."

"We didn't come here to take snuff with you—and you know it!" shouted the angry bailiff, at last finding his tongue.

"No? But it is pleasant even if one does not plan ahead to indulge." Spurred on by their surprise and anger, Fabien was having a delightful time. Returning the snuffbox to his pocket with apparent regret, he continued, "Perhaps a sip of wine would be more to your liking?" Without waiting for a reply he filled three glasses from a ewer on the table. "Help yourselves, gentlemen —to your very good health—and future success!" Fabien raised his glass and waited, but not for more than a second. The men's red faces indicated too plainly that they never refused a drink.

After the rich red wine had passed their throats it seemed to wash away the anger and hateful words that had been struggling for utterance.

"Monsieur, we are sorry that it is our unpleasant duty to be insistent, but your

creditors are very pressing and we must have money to-day."

At last it was out, mellowed perhaps by wine, although no less true and foreboding in the horrible consequences if the demands were not met.

"I have told the creditors that I will pay them next week," Fabien succeeded in making his voice stern and final.

"Yes, you have told them that every day for weeks! We will not leave here without the money," snorted the other bailiff angrily.

"The furnishings in this house are worth a considerable amount," the other continued speculatively as he appraised the valuable tapestries, the rich hangings and rare ornaments in the room.

Fabien understood their intentions and squirmed uneasily. How terrible for Manon if the furnishings she loved were moved out to meet creditors' demands. For a moment he thought desperately about how he could get rid of the collectors; then a smile spread over his face and he said to the bailiffs: "Your expression reminds me—as Richelieu said to Madame du Barry just as she was about to—if you have heard this priceless

story, stop me—Du Barry was on the point of—" With a friendly hand on each man's shoulder Fabien lowered his voice and continued the point of his story as he craftily guided them toward the door without their realizing what was happening.

Fortunately they enjoyed a rare bit of gossip as much as a glass of rare wine. Deeply absorbed in the scandal they were oblivious to their surroundings until they found themselves in the open entrance of the house. Immediately they recalled their duty and began noisy protestations.

"Next week," Fabien said with a disarming smile, "word of honor," and closed the door in their faces.

It was a narrow escape and good riddance. However, Fabien was worried because that sort of thing could not continue indefinitely. His credit was exhausted and he had postponed payments so many times that it could not be done again. It would have been comforting to share the worry with Manon, and, although Fabien longed for her sympathy, he had sworn never to make her practice economy; he must handle the matter alone. His air of carefree raillery vanished with

the departing bailiffs, and left him in a frightful quandary.

Dejectedly entering the library, he began sorting over great sheafs of unpaid and long overdue bills. Among them were a number of extravagant ones incurred by Lescaut. It was an imposition. Aside from his income, Lescaut had gleaned enough from the gaming tables to live in luxury, but he spent enormous sums indulging his various appetites and a big amount was hoarded away for an indolent old age. Lescaut was crafty.

After the inhuman way he had treated his sister neither she nor Fabien had any desire for his society. But unfortunately the house they leased was in the very neighborhood selected by Lescaut, after the Comte ousted him following Manon's unceremonious departure. One day he chanced to see Manon leave her carriage. Immediately he followed her into the house and not many hours elapsed before he established himself in their midst.

Lescaut was rude and without the slightest principle of honor, so it meant nothing to him that his presence was undesirable. He was determined upon a friendly relationship, because it meant a reduction in

personal expenses. By preference he was a card sharp and a gambler, but recently his hand had grown unsteady so that good fortune was as fickle and elusive as luck. Money became the most desirable of all possible possessions and he took all he could get whenever possible. As long as Fabien could provide handsomely, after the manner of the Comte, Manon's choice of lovers was agreeable to her unscrupulous brother.

Lescaut sauntered into the library while Fabien was pondering over finances. Having secretly been through the bills himself, merely as a matter of curiosity, he knew that matters were painfully pressing.

"What are you going to do about it?" he inquired.

"What is there to do?" Fabien shook his head hopelessly and looked into space. He had promised the bailiffs that money would be forthcoming on the following week, but there was no more chance of having it then than there was of seeing it appear on the desk before his very eyes in the next five minutes. One was exactly as hopeless or possible as the other.

Lescaut shrugged his shoulders. There was something that could be done if Fabien

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"GOLD IS YOUR LOVE—HERE—TAKE IT!"

When A Man Loves.

would agree. Picking up a deck of cards from the table, his expert fingers casually divided the pack and shuffled them quicker than the eye could follow.

"You are clever enough to make your living at cards," he remarked as he again shuffled in mid-air. "Once you learn the tricks of the trade, it is simple."

"Never!" With a fleeting expression of horror Fabien shook his head decisively.

"Then why not retrench—" Again Lescaut shrugged and continued shuffling the cards directly in front of Fabien. "Cut down expenses—get yourselves a farm in the country and a nice little plow—Manon would like that!" He laughed tauntingly.

"If I am not able to supply Manon with the luxuries she loves I deserve to lose her."

"You could make money at the card tables —if you would," the gambler temptingly stated a fact.

"Cheating at cards is out of the question—for a gentleman, and I was born that. My ancestors were honorable men."

Fabien was proud.

"Mine were not, thank God!" returned Lescaut heartily. "I inherited pluck, not scruples." Lescaut continued as Fabien

stared gloomily out the window. "Take a man with millions, and there are many of them in Paris, does he mind losing a hundred louis? No! And isn't a hundred louis better for being in circulation? It's only justice!"

This was more philosophical than anything Lescaut had said before. Fabien looked at him in amused interest. Conscious of his attention, Lescaut calmly shot an ace out of his sleeve. Fabien watched with a fascinated intentness that was not lost on the trickster. Again Lescaut manipulated the aces.

"Ah!" exclaimed Fabien admiringly.

"Do you want to try?" Lescaut offered the cards.

"You flatter me—I am not that clever—but as a matter of curiosity I will see if my fingers are as quick as yours." Fabien accepted the cards.

Both men stared in amazement as Fabien dealt an ace from his sleeve with as much adroitness as his teacher had displayed.

"A bit of luck, that! You can't do it again," came from Lescaut.

The first glow of success went to Fabien's head and he was annoyed at having Lescaut

steal the glamour by terming it "luck." Just to prove that he had mastered the trick, Fabien shot *two* cards from his sleeve in quick succession. He was very pleased with himself.

"Where did you ever get such an agile wrist?" inquired Lescaut with admiration.

"You forget that for years I was a censer swinger in the Church."

Fabien's amazing adaptability in handling the cards absolutely sold him on the possibilities of the game. For hours he practiced under Lescaut's tutelage, learning all the fine points and improving upon many of them. He acquired a remarkable facility in sleight of hand tricks. With the help of a pair of long lace cuff ruffles he learned to shuffle and store certain cards away for future use with such adroitness that the keenest observer could detect nothing out of order.

Within a few days Lescaut introduced Fabien to various clubs. It was vital that money in large quantities should be his, therefore Fabien cast his scruples to the winds and very soon piled up a real fortune.

He discovered that one could love money without being a miser. He loved it only be-

cause it had the power to make Manon happy. They were also able to continue their extravagant mode of living and devote the hours to love and pleasure without fear of being turned out on the streets.

Love is more satisfying than fame or wealth, but it cannot exist without certain artificial stimulation that comes from contact with things money can buy and the reflected glory that follows in the wake of fame.

Fabien was a sensitive lover. It humiliated him to resort to vulgar means of filling his purse, but love had worked such a change in his nature that he would have broken every commandment in order to keep Manon with him and give her all her heart desired. Love had carried him far away from the road that led to a celibate's life at St. Sulpice; also, it had taken Manon away from a peaceful convent existence even before she had entered the sacred walls. Their love had made them both happy and miserable. It had taught them the agonies of separation, the gnawing anguish of doubt, the pain of poverty and the glorious contentment that comes with wealth and true love. It had gone so far as to turn Fabien into a cheat,

but he had no regrets because all that he did was for Manon. He loved her! That was reason enough, at least for the time being.

Later Fabien was to find that when a man loves there is no end to serious problems that arise to mock his happiness.

CHAPTER XVII

THE KING DEMANDS MANON

A PASSION for gambling surged through Paris. The illustrious men and women of the day frequently gathered in the salons of the Duc de Richelieu to try their skill and see what fickle fortune could do for them before the night was over.

The Duc's magnificent apartment was also a favorite meeting place for the nobility, and on one particular night His Majesty King Louis XV came in company with Comte de Ravoir. He was in search of diversion and wore a mysterious little black eye mask to prevent recognition.

However, the disguise did not deceive the Duc de Richelieu, and when he saw the two distinguished gentlemen enter his salon he greeted them in a friendly fashion, omitting the courtly bow that was really a King's due.

"That is right," observed His Majesty, "I wish to remain incognito. Tell no one I am here."

"It is a command!" replied the Duc gravely.

His Majesty leisurely surveyed the people in the room before turning to the Comte with a shrug of annoyance. "The women are disappointing—perhaps the cards will divert us. Who is your keenest player?" The King prided himself on being very shrewd with the cards—and he was.

"A gentleman who is not yet here," replied the Duc, "Monsieur le Chevalier des Grieux—he has recently made a fortune at our tables."

The Comte flushed hotly at mention of Fabien's name and did not share the King's interest. He had not seen Fabien since that night at Frascati's when the still unavenged insult was made in the presence of a room full of people. Nevertheless, the Comte knew that Manon had deserted him for the fiery young man, and he was determined to revenge himself in some way that would cause them both great anguish.

"I shall look forward to playing with your wizard—and I shall win! Bring him to me for a game as soon as he arrives." The King chuckled in pleasant anticipation.

"You need not wait long, your Majesty,"

whispered the Duc, "for there he is just coming downstairs with his lady, Manon Lescaut."

The King turned slowly, then stopped—spellbound—as his masked eyes rested upon Manon. Never had she looked more gorgeously sweet and desirable. Fabien's wealth had enabled him to buy the most priceless things Paris offered, and the mere fact that Manon wore them made their beauty more alluring. Love had also worked its miracle of perfection with her figure, and the expression on her face was a mixture of adorable innocent charm and irresistible seductiveness.

His Majesty noticed that her ornaments were as handsome as any of the crown jewels, also she wore them like a Queen.

Through the slits of the small black mask Louis feasted his eyes on Manon's fascinating beauty. He was so intrigued that not for a moment did he permit the figure of her escort to intrude on his vision.

"A little Venus!" exclaimed the King, grasping Richelieu's arm. "Present her to me immediately."

As the Duc de Richelieu went off on his

mission the King was attracted by the mention of Manon's name. Inclining his head without turning around, he listened intently to a conversation going on at a near-by table.

"So you think you can copy the pretty ways of Manon—don't, it makes you ridiculous," said a man to Nana.

"You old blockhead," she snapped back, "Manon has the best technic in Paris! See how it works with Des Grieux—he simply loads her with diamonds." Nana was dressed in the best possible imitation she could manage to make herself look like Manon, she also assumed an innocent air and amused everyone by adopting a demure, sweet tone of voice.

"I see that he loads her with jewels—and she looks beautiful in them—but Nana, if I had the Chevalier's genius for cards I could buy the crown jewels."

The King was amused at hearing this reference to the royal jewel box. However, his interest in the gossip waned and he impatiently awaited the arrival of Manon. He did not even answer when the Comte spoke—he was devising a plan that would make Manon his, just as surely as he was the King

of France. It was a cruel ruse he had in mind.

The things men do when they love, or think they do, are not worth honorable mention. That time old saying, "All is fair in love and war," will ever be used as an excuse for many digressions, and King Louis XV did not prove an exception to the rule.

Fabien and Manon were the center of an eager group, who greeted them as soon as they came down the stairs. He was as greatly admired by the women as she was by the men.

On that particular night Fabien was attired in lustrous white satin. His coat buttons, buckles and fob were resplendent with diamonds. It was perhaps significant that the exquisite lace on his cuffs was a little fuller and longer than usual. Contact with the world plus his recent prosperity gave him an air of assurance that was most attractive. All of this, coupled with his natural gentlemanly manner and courteous attentiveness to Manon made him a paragon of all that was expected of a man—at least from the feminine viewpoint.

The Duc de Richelieu intruded on the little group and said, "I have been ordered

to present you to a certain gentleman."

Manon looked at him in surprise and ignored his extended arm. "Indeed!" she replied proudly. "But that does not mean that I will accompany you."

Upon hearing Manon speak so feelingly Fabien turned from his companions and looked at the Duc with narrowing eyes that glittered like steel.

"It is a command," the Duc answered Fabien's unspoken question with an apologetic shrug.

"Who dares command Manon?" Fabien's voice was full of suppressed fury.

"I am not at liberty to say," replied the Duc, "but yonder the gentleman stands." He inclined his head toward King Louis, whose identity was concealed behind his mask.

Fabien scrutinized the lower part of the King's face and his figure without any show of recognition, then he chanced to see that he was wearing a ring with a royal seal.

"My dear," Fabien said quietly to Manon, "it is the King who commands your presence. You must go, his will is irrevocable."

"Won't you come with me, then?" Manon

was like a child who dreaded going on a disagreeable errand alone.

"I have not been invited, darling," Fabien smiled. "Here is your escort."

With Fabien's sanction Manon accepted the Duc de Richelieu's arm and they approached the King.

Fabien pretended interest in his companion's conversation, but out of the corner of his eye he did not lose one point in the little scene between his beloved Manon and the King. For the first time in his life Fabien experienced the pangs of jealousy.

The Comte made an embarrassed retreat so he would not be forced to meet Manon—he wanted to postpone that pleasure until his plans for revenge were better formulated.

When Manon found herself alone in King Louis' presence she inclined her head with unconscious charm and humility as she said faintly, "Your Majesty!" It was the first time she had ever been in the presence of royalty and her manner showed that she was pleased as well as a bit thrilled.

The King was delighted. He saw that she was about to make a sweeping courtsy and grasped her arm. "Not that—I do not

wish to be recognized." He looked at her intently. "But I seem to recognize you—I wonder where—Mon Dieu! I know!" King Louis continued gazing at Manon with growing admiration.

"You remember seeing me before, Your Majesty?" Manon questioned, her pretty brow all wrinkled up in an effort to think.

"Most assuredly I do," laughed the King delightedly, "and it is flattering to you that I should."

"Of course, Your Majesty! But you must mistake me for some one else—I am sure I would remember if—"

"If we had talked, yes," interrupted the King. "No, I am not mistaken, no one else in the world has a face like yours."

"Oh, Your Majesty!" Manon was overwhelmed. She succeeded in making a curtsy before the King could stop her. "It must have been in another world that we met then." Manon's eyes twinkled.

"True! You were in the land of love, but I was just on the streets of Paris," said the King reminiscently.

Manon was so perplexed that she could not think of anything to say.

"I seem to have been wrong," continued

the King. "Instead of breaking, as I prophesied, your bubble of love has assumed amazing proportions." Louis was enjoying himself to the utmost and Manon's childish and charming perplexity only added zest to the occasion.

"Your Majesty, please tell me what you mean. I do not seem to understand at all."

The fickle King suddenly decided that curiosity was a beautiful trait in a woman —he had always hated it before.

"I will tell you—it is a pretty story!" The King did not take his licentious eyes from Manon's lovely face as he continued: "It was just at dusk one rainy evening a little over a year ago. I was in my coach driving along the Boulevard when my progress was halted by a young girl and her equally youthful escort, who unconsciously held up the royal procession while they crossed the street, hand in hand, aware only of the love they saw in each other's eyes. My guards wanted to throw them in prison for what they termed disrespect to me, but it was my whim to permit the young lovers to continue on their short path of happiness unmolested. Now do you understand?"

He bent closer to Manon and smiled into her face.

"It is a sweet story, but I do not see where I—"

"You were the young girl," interrupted the King, then waited to see what effect the announcement would have on Manon.

"Oh," she exclaimed in mortification. "What a dreadful thing for us to have done!"

"No. It was beautiful—it amused me then and pleases me even more now that I have seen you in a different light. At what roadside inn did you leave the young man?" The question was filled with implications that Manon did not understand.

"Leave him, Your Majesty?" she inquired in surprise. "I would not leave him for the world—here he is now!" Manon smiled happily as she saw Fabien approaching them with the Duc de Richelieu.

The presentation of the Chevalier des Grieux to his King was an odd affair. The fact that the King insisted upon his identity being kept from the people in general forced the Duc to introduce them in pantomime, omitting names. He had previously explained to Fabien that a certain masked

gentleman—Fabien understood who he was—desired to engage in a game of cards with him. For two reasons Fabien eagerly accepted the challenge. First, it would put an end to the King's long and animated conversation with Manon. Second, it would give him a chance to match his skill against a man who was reputed to be a worthy opponent.

The fact that the best card player in Paris turned out to be Manon's escort supplied an additional interest for the King. To play a man for the sake of matching card wits was diverting, but to play a man for his lady was the essence of high sport and made a game worth the power of concentration.

The King had decided that he wanted Manon—he had also made up his mind to play cards with Des Grieux. The two desires fitted together very well. Without further ado he seated himself at a small card table and signified his desire for Fabien to take the other chair.

The two men eyed each other speculatively. It was the King's gaze that shifted first, and to cover up his annoyance he turned to the Duc de Richelieu and said, "See that we have no onlookers."

A Warner Bros. Production. *When A Man Loves.*

"SUPPOSE THE KING SHOULD TAKE A FANCY TO HER HIMSELF?"

The Duc bowed in obeyance. "Monseigneur prefers a quiet game," he said to Manon, and offering his arm, led her away to a respectful distance.

They were joined by Lescaut, who since Fabien's prosperity had become a constant and faithful satellite.

Among the other interested spectators was the Comte de Ravoir. The sight of Manon aroused him as nothing on earth had ever done before, and he so detested Fabien that his thoughts were engrossed in devising a plan whereby he could dispose of him and again win possession of Manon.

Manon was the innocent victim of three men's desires. The Comte's awakened interest literally put her in a position that offered no security from this man who had enjoyed her exclusive society for a short period.

The King also desired Manon and was fast driving Fabien into a corner from which he could no longer reach out and protect his loved one.

At the card table the two players continued to measure the possibilities of the game and each other.

The King appropriated the first deal. He

lost the hand and a sum of money that brought forth an irritable frown. Fabien noticed it and inquired politely:

"Do you care to continue?" He stacked his winnings in neat piles.

The King meditated a moment. He prided himself on his playing and was an ungracious loser. An idea that had been struggling in the back of his mind since learning of the relationship between Manon and Fabien suddenly became clarified.

"We shall continue by all means—and the stakes are to be higher," he said sharply.

"It is immaterial to me," Fabien replied with a shrug of unconcern.

King Louis noticed his opponent's indifference. It angered him. Deliberately turning around in his chair he looked at Manon with the same sort of expression that a hungry wolf flashes upon his prey.

Fabien did not miss the byplay. His lips set in a hard, straight line. He drew in his breath sharply and exerted every effort to refrain from making a scene.

Manon was so superbly created for love that it is not strange the King, as well as others, desired her. Nor is it strange that Fabien, as her chosen lover, should resent

the covetous glances that other men showered upon her. One comfort was the assurance of Manon's fidelity to him. He thought her so good, so innocent and precious that he forgot the horrible incidents of the past which caused others to classify her as a different woman entirely.

When the King again turned his attention to the game Fabien's face was inscrutable. His hands were too well trained to shake, but his heart was pounding furiously.

With the effect of just having evolved the idea, the King said: "We will resume playing. This time the stakes will be any of my possessions that you may choose to name against—" the King leaned across the table, "Mademoiselle Lescaut!"

For a second Fabien's heart stopped beating. His eyes shone like pin points of steel. Without fear he looked squarely into the King's masked eyes and said:

"Monsieur—one does not reach to Heaven for a star and fling it upon the soiled cloth of a gaming table."

A quick flash of anger suffused Louis' face. "We will play for the stakes I suggest!" It was the King rather than the man speaking.

"I will not play!" Fabien's jaw was set. Only his eyes smiled. With a gesture of finality he placed his cards on the table.

"Are you uncertain of your skill—or merely afraid?" the King insinuated.

"Neither!" Fabien's calmness annoyed the King.

With an angry gesture Louis ripped off his mask and exposed himself to the interested spectators, who by this time had gathered close about the table.

"The King! King Louis of France!" came in loud whispers from many throats.

Although Fabien knew the identity of his opponent, there was no reason to admit it until now. He had not been granted the honor of being properly presented. The King, on his part, had felt secure in his incognito. He had entirely forgotten about the royal coat of arms on his little finger ring and had no idea that Fabien had known him from the first.

"Now we will play," said the King, as though the matter were settled beyond dispute. No one could refuse the King of France.

"I am only a subject of France—you are her King!" Fabien was not in a position

to say more, and it would have been treason to refuse now that the King's identity had been made known.

Without another word the King picked up the cards. He omitted the formality of cutting and dealt.

Manon and Fabien looked deep into each other's eyes across the few feet of space that separated them. Hers were filled with pleading and terror. Fabien's tried to say, "Don't worry, darling mine, I will win!"

The Duc de Richelieu restrained Manon from going to Fabien's side.

When news of the King's presence spread about the room other games and tables were deserted. The air became electric with tense excitement and suspense. Everyone gathered about the small table where His Majesty King Louis of France was playing with the most expert card man of Paris.

Fabien's face was stolid, inscrutable. He was playing for his very life.

The King fanned his cards and glanced at them furtively with narrowing eyes. They played. Fabien took the first trick. The King won the second. The third again fell to Fabien. He hesitated long enough to catch Manon's attention. His soul was in

his eyes, and she did her best to smile back encouragingly. The game went on.

"This will be the last deal, Monsieur—the next hand will decide the game!" The King was nervous.

"As you will, Your Majesty." Fabien bowed, but there was no trace of emotion in his face or manner. His control was superb.

The King played with conscious deliberation. His first three cards were all kings. A smile of satisfaction lighted his face. "You have only one chance to beat a King." The double meaning was significant to everyone. But each time Louis' smile quickly disappeared as he saw his antagonist top his card with an ace! He watched furtively, plainly annoyed rather than worried, at such unusual luck.

Fabien's steely eyes did not miss a single move of his opponent's. He saw him manipulate a card, although he gave no sign. Up until this point Fabien's success had been due entirely to luck. Fate had given him the ace of spades, clubs and hearts as well as one useless card of small denomination. He had taken three tricks—the game was his! Fabien permitted a relieved smile to relax his face, the last trick would not

matter. Then why was the King surreptitiously changing his last card? Fabien's temples pounded furiously.

The King was speaking: "The cards we have played do not count. Whoever takes this last trick wins!"

The injustice of the thing was appalling. However, it made Fabien understand the hopelessness of the situation. No! It must not be hopeless. He must win!

Fabien had learned how to cheat in order to give Manon all the luxuries she craved. Now he would cheat to keep her for his own. It was well he had practiced—he needed it. The King was watching him intently. Fabien did not waver. Catching Louis' gaze, he looked into the pupils of the royal eyes until they contracted to needle point dimensions in an effort to shut out the hypnotic force that prevented him from turning away. While Fabien's eyes thus held the King's attention he manipulated his last worthless card. The card that was to decide Manon's fate. He managed it so cleverly that Lescaut was the only other one in the room who knew what had happened. His admiration did him credit.

It was Fabien's turn to play. He turned

up the ace of diamonds! The highest card left in the pack!

No one dared make a sound—their King had lost!

A peculiar expression lighted up the King's face. He looked slowly from Fabien to the winning ace on the table, then back to the lone card in his own hand. After a moment's deliberation he played—the ace of diamonds!

A breathless silence filled the room.

The Chevalier des Grieux had been caught cheating. His face was white, but he continued to look steadily at the King.

Manon was terrified.

A gleam of triumph made the Comte de Ravoir look like a younger and happier man. This was superior to any punishment he had been able to think of.

Lescaut, better than anyone in the room, appreciated the seriousness of the situation. He had grown sincerely fond of Fabien and Manon and wondered what he could do to help relieve the situation.

After what seemed an eternity the King rose and said contemptuously, "Monsieur le Chevalier, you are a cheat—the stake is mine!"

At the first move from King Louis, Fabien also rose to his feet and under cover of getting up he made a quick, significant gesture to Lescaut to get Manon out of the room.

No sooner was the sign made than Lescaut rose to the occasion and started guiding her toward the door. The Comte, however, understood and attempted to block their way.

"Sire, you are the King,[2]" said Fabien, quietly addressing His Majesty, "and one dares not say of one's King that he cheats."

The King was speechless with amazed fury.

The crowd gasped—could it be possible? Two aces of diamonds were played. Did the King substitute or did Le Chevalier?

The Duc de Richelieu and other loyal subjects sprang to the defense of their King with drawn swords, and Fabien found himself facing them alone.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE KING GIVES MANON TO THE COMTE

Two powerful guards joined the Comte and prevented Lescaut taking Manon from the room. King Louis' prey was trapped.

Through virtue of his title the King was master of the situation and no one dared do anything without his sanction or a word from the Duc de Richelieu.

Not even a whisper was heard in the great salon.

With unexpected suddenness His Majesty's little evening of pleasure had come to a rude halt. It was unheard of for a man to oppose the King's will. It had never been known to happen before, and Louis was the most surprised person there. Many times in the past he had selected a woman and gotten her without so much opposition and trouble. But never before had he delt with as devoted a lover and protector as Fabien. Unfortunately the whole incident savored of scandal that he could ill afford to become a part of in such a public place.

After a whispered word to the Duc, Louis retreated from the room. He walked slowly, with head erect and no indication of fear, but it was nevertheless a forced retreat. The crowd divided and made an aisle for their King, that led him to a private room at the head of the stairs. He was compelled to pass within a few feet of Manon who, under Lescaut's surreptitious guidance, was being gradually pushed toward the entrance doors in a vain hope of escape.

If it had not been for fear of public criticism, King Louis would have taken Manon with him and thus brought the matter to a satisfactory finish; instead, he whispered to the Comte de Ravoir:

"See that she is brought to me in yonder room, without delay."

The Comte's head bowed in obeyance, but inwardly he rebelled at the idea. Manon must be *his* again. Of that much he was determined, in spite of the fact that she was the King's property won from her lover in a card game.

Back by the table the Duc de Richelieu was saying to Fabien, "Monsieur Des Grieux, I demand that you apologize to your King!"

Fabien's only answer was a mocking laugh!

The crowd gasped in amazement, as one man. Quick to avenge the brazen insult Richelieu drew his sword. No sooner had the long steel flashed from its sheath than Fabien's ready blade crossed it in mid-air with a resounding clang! It was only the work of a moment to disarm the Duc de Richelieu, although the small victory gave Fabien no advantage, as other loyal supporters of the King closed in and opened attack.

For a brief second Fabien dared search for Manon in the crowd—he saw that Lescaut was leading her up the stairs and that the Comte was struggling to push through the surging mass and reach her side! With a mighty effort Fabien turned his back toward the stairs and cleverly kept his adversaries at bay while working backward, step by step in the direction of Manon. His one desire was to reach her. He bravely fought three or four men at a time, while others stood ready to enter when their friends fell.

Fabien proved himself as unconquerable with the sword as he had been at the card table. Finally, the cowardly, joint attack of

several noblemen succeeded in disarming him. But if they anticipated a calm surrender they were mistaken. Fabien was fighting for the only thing in the world that made life worth living and he knew that if he was captured Manon would be made an unwilling prisoner in the King's palace. The very thought of it gave Fabien new strength to carry on.

Deprived of his weapon it was necessary to do something without further delay. He leaped on top of a near-by table and swinging a chair from the floor raised it on high and brought it down with dangerous force upon the heads and swords of the men who tried to wound or capture him.

Fabien fought like a ferocious animal of the wild, trapped by a band of hunters in his lair. His daring and very fierceness seemed to intimidate them. Their swords could not get past that chair that he swung about him in deadly circles.

The success gained by his strategic position gave Fabien a moment's respite. Immediately he looked for Manon. To his horror he saw the Comte pushing her into a private room at the head of the stairs while

two of the King's Guards seized Lescaut and prevented him going with her.

Fabien's sanity almost snapped at thought of what might be Manon's fate behind that closed door. He had no sword and it appeared that the entire salon full of people was against him. What could he do?

Down at the other end of the hall some servants were entering with long clubs that were destined to dislodge Fabien from his place on the table. He threw his weapon—the chair—at the people who were between the table and the staircase; then with a superhuman effort he crouched and leaped over the sprawling men on to the back of a guard at the foot of the stairs. Before anyone was quite aware of what had happened, Fabien began fighting his way up the staircase.

One man with a little more courage than the others climbed up the balustrade and surprised Fabien by lunging upon him with all force. They fell together on the landing. In the fight that ensued Fabien wrested his adversary's sword from his hand and stood on the blade to protect it while he hurled the man bodily upon the crowd below, as they fought to come up the stairs.

Encouraged by the comforting feel of a sword in his hand again, Fabien fought like a demon. Finally only one man remained between him and the door he had seen Manon enter, what seemed to be an eternity ago. With a sharp cry the man fell back, gasping from the pain in his shoulder. Fabien withdrew his sword and rushed to the closed door that kept Manon from him. It was locked!

Glancing down the corridor he saw Lescaut entering another room—perhaps an adjoining one, but the risk involved in trying to reach it was too great. He pushed and thumped against the locked panel with the entire strength of his body. The lock snapped! He entered and closed the door behind him just as the angry supporters of the King surged upon the landing.

Fabien would not have been able to get into the room if the great metal bolt had been in place. Fortunately for him the precaution had not been taken, but he lost no time in shooting it into the secure wall socket. The men outside had begun pounding on the bolted door when Fabien turned his back to it and surveyed the room. It was empty! Three closed doors mocked him

from the other walls. Was he too late? What had become of Manon?

* * * * * * *

When Manon found herself forced into the small room at the head of the stairs, she locked the bolt, just as Fabien did later. The room was empty and while she was debating which of the three other doors to try, one of them opened and King Louis approached her with amusement and pleasant anticipation.

"The Chevalier was not a graceful loser, Mademoiselle," he said suavely, "But you —you are honest enough to deliver yourself in person!"

"Oh!" It was a startled cry of apprehension as she drew back in fear.

"Come here!" commanded the King, moistening his small full lips.

Manon looked him squarely in the eyes—but did not move.

"I said, 'come here!'" Annoyed at not being obeyed, Louis spoke harshly.

"Your Majesty!" It was a cry for pity, but Louis mistook it for embarrassment.

Behind the King the door opened again and Manon saw the Comte quietly enter the room and stand with his back to the door.

A Warner Bros. Production. *When A Man Loves.*

IN DEFENCE OF THE LADY OF HIS HEART.

A feeling of utter helplessness surged over her as the King advanced and attempted to caress her. Her eyes blazed with anger as she struck down his arms and ran to the other side of the room. Pounding on the bolted door she called wildly for Fabien.

The King was infuriated. Never before in his licentious career had his amorous advances met with such indifference and repulsion.

"Monsieur le Comte," he said with an angry gesture, "It seems this wench still prefers her card cheating lover to, shall we say, a friendship with her King."

"Your Majesty's pardon," replied De Ravoir, "But, Sire, what can you expect? The woman had become so notorious that even I was forced to discard her!"

At this the King turned to look at Manon with a scowl on his face that indicated a mixture of rage and disappointment.

"Your dignity will suffer as it is," continued the Comte, "for she will doubtless make of this a joke to be repeated at the gaming tables of Paris."

The King continued to scowl. Already he had made himself ridiculous, and ridicule of all things he could neither stand nor afford.

After all, why was one woman any better or any worse than another? With a shrug he turned and left the room, saying as he approached the door, "She is my property—I give her to you. Perhaps from past experience you can find a way to make her more agreeable to your wishes."

As the door closed behind the King, Comte de Ravoir walked slowly toward the corner of the room where Manon was crouched in a vain attempt to make herself as inconspicuous as possible. He stood looking at her for a moment with a leering smile on his face.

"And so, my pretty one, you think it is an easy thing to do, to flaunt His Majesty? Rash child! I have succeeded in saving you from grave trouble. Now you are mine again. A gift from our King!"

He bent closer as if to take Manon in his arms. She gazed at him with a contemptuous smile which broke into sneering laughter as she said:

"Monsieur le Comte is pleased to make himself even more ridiculous than the King."

"As a lover you may brush me aside," said De Ravoir menacingly as he seized her

wrist angrily, "But as an enemy I am not to be disposed of so easily—that I promise you!"

Manon continued to look upon him as something unclean, abhorrent, something to be utterly despised.

With a half suppressed oath and veiled threat the Comte hurried through the same doorway that the King had used a moment before.

Manon was alone. Outside in the corridors she could still hear the shouts and sounds of conflict. With trembling limbs, terror-stricken and fearful for Fabien, she forced herself toward the door through which she had entered. The shuffling of feet, muttered oaths half smothered by gasping breath, just the other side of the door, caused her to pause for a moment. Was it Fabien? Or André? Her shaking fingers fumbled with the bolt and unfastened it, but over her shoulder appeared a hairy hand that grasped her wrist. She shook it off with almost superhuman strength and with a final wrench opened the door. A terrifying shriek for help escaped her as she saw her brother André, in a furious struggle with several guards.

Lescaut had a fleeting glimpse of Manon before many hands reached out and drew her back into the room. With a final desperate lunge he broke away from his captors and burst through the door after her. The power of several men seemed to be his as he hurled himself upon the guards that were carrying, half leading his sister away. Gone forever was the craven, despicable despoiler of women. The inhuman scavenger who sought to live from the forced immorality of his own sister. In its place was an avenging madman whose uncanny strength grasped a victim in each hand, cracked their skulls together and tossed them aside. The very suddenness of his attack, the maniacal fury of his hands was demoralizing.

From the doorway the Comte watched the struggle, then as Lescaut crashed another guard to the floor De Ravoir drew his sword and, true to his cowardly nature, plunged the keen blade deep into André Lescaut's back.

* * * * * * *

When the King's soldiers carried Manon through the doorway she knew that André was fighting to save her, but she did not

know that he had ceased that struggle. She was dimly aware of the Comte hovering in the background, giving directions to the men, and her mind wandered back to Fabien. With sobs that racked her to her very soul she ceased her struggles and with a whispered prayer for the safety of her lover let herself be borne away.

Manon had no idea where she was being taken.

Fate had again separated her from Fabien and put her in the Comte's power. She was crazed with anxiety to know what had happened to her lover and if they would ever see each other again.

* * * * * * *

When Fabien won the seclusion of the little room at the head of the stairs, and locked out the angry crowd, he was frantic to find Manon. The fact that she was not there spurred him into action without further delay. Of the three doors that stared blindly from the surrounding walls he chose the one to the left. He hoped it would lead into the same room he had seen Lescaut enter from the corridor a short while before.

Fortunately the door was unlocked. Bursting into the room, Fabien saw Lescaut

leaning over a chair, but his thoughts were so concerned with Manon that he did not notice the deadly stream of blood that slowly trickled down the back of Lescaut's satin coat.

"Where is Manon!?" demanded Fabien.

"In there—a—moment—ago," gasped Lescaut with difficulty, waving toward a door opposite the one Fabien had entered.

"My God, man, you are wounded—in the back!" Fabien was all compassion and put his arms about Lescaut's dropping shoulders.

"Yes, a generous last thrust from—the—Comte." Lescaut smiled ironically with his hand pressed against his breast.

Fabien turned livid with rage. Cursing insanely he rushed to the door that Lescaut had indicated and pulled it open. The room was deserted. Manon had been taken away!

The sound of hostile voices put Fabien on his guard. With all possible speed he bolted the door and dashed across the room to fasten the one through which he had come. It was no sooner done than Richelieu and the Comte, backed by numerous guards, demanded admittance.

Fabien ignored them with a feeling of con-

temptuous hatred. He knelt at Lescaut's side and began unfastening the wounded man's coat.

"Don't—waste time—with me! Find—Manon. It is—impossible—to cheat—death!" For a moment their hands met in a firm grasp that wiped away all past grievances. Then Lescaut's head slumped forward and he spoke no more.

Fabien clutched the lifeless shoulders hopelessly. It was a tender, regretful farewell to the man who had once done him so great a wrong.

The door began to bulge from the combined efforts of the guards. They knew that Fabien must have locked himself in the room and in as much as the King had ordered his capture they were determined to effect it without further delay. The Comte and Richelieu were standing by to see that Fabien was brought to justice. Both of them enjoyed the evening's scandal and were reviewing it somewhat in detail while waiting for the door to be broken down.

Fabien heard the Comte explain, "I persuaded His Majesty that it would be wise to let the girl go—she is such a notorious

creature that she would have made sport of his name in public."

"What did he do with her?" Richelieu was intrigued.

"He presented her to me, but I have had her before and am tired of her inconstancy. I have consigned her to the Magdalen Prison—she is being driven there even now." The Comte was decidedly pleased with himself.

"Foolish girl," supplied Richelieu. "She will not find prison cots as comfortable as the soft bed the King would have given her!" Both men laughed uproariously.

Fabien did not wait to hear more. He had learned of Manon's terrible plight and knew that death awaited him—if he was caught. Escape through any one of the doors was a vain hope. Fabien rushed to the window and sized up his chances of getting out that way. It was a long drop to the courtyard below, yet it was his only chance —and he took it!

Thick vines, ages old, that covered the walls were a help, and grasping them with frenzied hands Fabien clawed and swung and fought his way to the ground with a final jump that nearly broke his legs. His

hands were bleeding, his clothes were dusty and torn, his head throbbed feverishly and sharp pains tortured the joints in his hips, knees and ankles; but after a moment he picked himself up and ran with all possible speed toward the open highway and momentary freedom.

Manon in the Prison of the Magdalen! It was unthinkable! What could he do to rescue her? Would he even have time to see her again before the sharp knife of the guillotine fell on his neck and cut her from his memory forever?

CHAPTER XIX

MANON IS CAST INTO PRISON

In the midst of this profound dejection and anxiety, Fabien appreciated the fact that a formal satin costume and jewels were too conspicuous and inappropriate for a fugitive to wear along the public highways in the dark morning hours.

The risk of going to his own apartments for a change was too great. Again in his extremity he thought of Tiberge and hastening to his lodging found the faithful friend asleep.

While Fabien exchanged his soiled finery for a very plain jacket and breeches of black he reluctantly related the harrowing events of the night.

It afforded a good opening for a moral lecture and Tiberge tried to make Fabièn realize what an irreparable injury he was inflicting upon his conscience, his honor, his family and his career.

"You have such a mild tractable disposition," Tiberge said, "that neither your fam-

ily, your tutors nor I can understand the excess into which you have fallen."

"I have changed since my student days." It was a simple statement of fact, too self-evident to have required utterance.

"Yes," agreed Tiberge. "It is astonishing that with your inherent good qualities and training you could have abandoned yourself to vice."

"You don't understand." Fabien resented the word 'vice.' "I love Manon. My affection, esteem, passion—what you will—is the greatest and purest thing that has ever come into my life. It is not sinful! It is not wrong! It is just deplorable that circumstances have been against us."

"Then cease trying to combat them and return to a regular and respectable life."

Fabien listened to the advice in a kindly manner, but without the smallest inclination to give up Manon and return to his former mode of life. Tiberge lamented his obduracy and could not agree that Manon, or any other woman for that matter, was worth the sacrifices and hardships that Fabien had endured on her account.

An hour later Fabien left Tiberge, for what proved to be the last time, and began

plodding his weary and lonely way toward the Prison of the Magdalen.

He wanted to arrive by dawn and explain to the Provost of Police, at the first possible moment, that it was all a horrible mistake for Manon to have been sent there.

Tormenting remembrances of his fatal and unhappy love flashed across Fabien's mind like shadows of the night. One seemed just as vague and temporary as the other and he had no power to control either. Manon's absence—the dread of never beholding her again—the mystery of her fate and the heartache he had caused his family, all formed melancholy thoughts in his overwrought brain.

Manon in the most infamous prison in the world! He had heard criminal stories of the way the women were treated and it seemed impossible for his adorable mistress to be a degraded inmate of the drab place along with the lowest dregs of Parisian womanhood.

Cost what it might, Fabien was so bent upon rescuing Manon that he decided to set fire to the prison if no other mode of escape presented itself.

The sun was just coming up beyond the grim forbidding walls of the prison when

Fabien entered the cold barren hall and said to the guard on duty at the desk, "I wish to see the Provost of Police—the man who is in authority—regarding Mademoiselle Lescaut."

"You are early," observed the guard, "however, the Provost is here. He has been superintending the deportation. Just a moment and I will see if he is through."

After what seemed to be an endless wait the Provost's secretary came out from a private office and motioned Fabien to enter.

It was a grim place. The rugged stone walls and tall, narrow iron barred windows made it feel dark and cold. The floor was bare and the only furnishings were a long desk and two stiff chairs. After his eyes became accustomed to the darkness—the room was lighted only by a few bright streaks from the rising sun that shone through the barred windows—Fabien discerned a man in the shadows. As soon as the door was closed he emerged into the light and faced Fabien with a mocking smile. He was the Comte de Ravoir!

"You!" exclaimed Fabien in amazement, then continued, "There must be some mistake, I wish to see the Provost of Police."

"I am he!" the Comte replied with a satisfied smile that turned into a sneer. "What do you want?"

"I heard that you had Manon put in here and came to get her out—I did not know that you were the Provost." Fabien tried to control the hopeless feeling that surged over him.

"No one can get her out, she is to be deported!" The Comte was enjoying his revenge.

"Deported!" exclaimed Fabien in horror. "Why? She has broken no laws."

"No?—Well, perhaps you and I have broken them for her, at least we have helped her break them; and the fact remains that she is to be deported this very morning. Come here!" he beckoned Fabien toward the window. "Do you see your fair mistress among the chain carriers?"

Trembling with apprehension and anger, Fabien went to the window and looked down into the courtyard below. Three covered vans were backed up to the prison doors. The horses were strapped to the shafts waiting for the familiar whip lash that would start them on their long journey to the water front.

Eighteen women, some of them horrible creatures, dressed in the ugly prison garb, walked across the courtyard in a long line. They were herded together, one behind the other, with heavy chains that circled their waists and wrists, leaving only a few feet of slack between each two.

Presently Fabien distinguished Manon Not even the wretchedness of her prison attire could hide her beauty, but her shoulders drooped and she attempted to hide her face in shame. Fabien knew that she did not belong to that order of the frail sisterhood where the Comte had cast her as punishment for spurning his advances.

"In the name of God, stop them!" Fabien cried in anguish. His voice sounded unnatural and his face was livid.

"Why should I resort to so much trouble for you? If *you* want her—get her!" The Comte indulged in a taunting laugh. He knew better than anyone else how impossible it would be for Fabien ever to enjoy Manon's society again. His revenge had been more complete than he anticipated. It was an unlooked-for climax to have the favored lover witness his mistress' degradation.

"By God—I *will* get her!" Fabien had again become a fighting demon.

The Comte laughed at this boast and pointed out how impossible such a capture would be. He also dwelt at length upon the fact that no man or woman could ignore and insult him without suffering the consequences.

Fabien saw the wagons with the chained prisoners passing out of the grounds, and all the blood seemed to leave his heart as Manon disappeared.

Looking after them, through the light of the early morning sun, the Comte remarked something about what a beautiful picture the caravan made. It was more than Fabien could endure. It had the effect of changing him into a madman. He sprang at the Comte's throat and held it in a grip that was deadly. His face was convulsed with hatred and rage.

"You killed Manon's brother like the coward that you are! You have ruined her life! Isn't there any manhood in you? Come on—stand on your feet and fight for your life—if you want it!"

Fabien released the Comte's throat and stood back long enough for him to recover.

A Warner Bros. Production. *When A Man Loves.*

MANON UNDER ARREST AND ABOUT TO BE DEPORTED TO LOUISIANA.

Then they locked in a fierce struggle and rolled over and over on the floor. The Comte's hand came in contact with a heavy iron bar and he was bringing it down with a smashing blow when Fabien worked himself free just in time to escape having his head crushed. Again Fabien attacked his victim, and this time he had no mercy. His hands went about the Comte's throat and he shook him like a ferret does a rat. When he felt the body go limp in his grasp he straightened up in surprise. It seemed incredible that his slight hands had been strong enough to crush the life out of a man —for there was no doubt about the Comte being dead. Nor was there any reason Fabien should lose valuable time regretting a thing that had been his self-appointed duty.

The Comte had killed Lescaut in a cowardly attack, he had insulted Manon beyond repair and sent her to a living death in the Colonies. Yes, he deserved his inglorious death and it was justice that Fabien should have been the one to avenge his friends.

Cautiously approaching the door he assured himself that the struggle had not been heard by the secretary or guard. All trace of the murder must be cleared away so that

he could leave without being stopped and reach Manon before the tragedy had been discovered. With great effort Fabien dragged the Comte's body to the desk and lifted it to a sitting position in the high backed chair. In one outstretched hand he placed a tall quill pen.

If anyone entered the door it would appear that the Comte was busily engaged with his work. Satisfied with the arrangement Fabien devoted a few moments to making himself presentable, then, opening the door—so that the secretary could see in—he turned back and said, as though speaking to the Comte, "I shall see that you are not disturbed, Monsieur."

Fabien went out and closed the door. He longed to run through the corridor and follow Manon in her miserable caravan; but discretion cautioned him to linger and avert suspicion that might otherwise make him prisoner on the spot with no hope of ever seeing her again.

"Monsieur is not in the best of moods," said Fabien as he paused at the secretary's desk with a friendly little warning. "You are fortunate that he prefers to be left alone." Then with an assumption of uncon-

cern he sauntered out of the prison and began walking rapidly along the road to Havre. Every few steps he would look back, fearful that the murder had been discovered and a posse sent after him.

As the minutes passed and no one appeared, Fabien's walk quickened into a run and he pushed on in search of his loved one.

Since meeting Manon that Spring morning at the White Horse Inn, Fabien's path had been strewn with many obstacles; but the assurance of her love—in return for his own—made it easy and delightful.

He had gone through sorrow and suffering. He had committed adultery. He had stolen, or cheated at cards; it amounts to the same thing. He had given up his family, renounced his inheritance, insulted the King and even committed murder. And now, Manon, his love, his very life, the one for whom he had done everything, was being taken away from him forever!

Heartsick, tired, lonely, frightened and even hungry, Fabien stumbled along the dusty road with the hope that he could overtake Manon's caravan and hold her in his arms once more.

CHAPTER XX

MANON IS DEPORTED

"WHO will care for my little Jean—my baby—my baby!" moaned the miserable young girl who was chained next to Manon in the cart.

"Stop your bellowing," snarled a hard faced woman from her place on the dirty straw that covered the bottom of the wagon. "Why didn't you think of the baby before you got it? Now shut up so I can enjoy the scenery." The woman laughed raucously. She was one of the group who, to use her own words: "Don't care a hang about being deported to America—men are just the same, no matter what side of the ocean they live on—besides a change of scene is stimulating."

Manon shuddered—it was all so horrible that it hardly seemed possible that she could be alive. Forgetting her own sorrow she reached over and tenderly patted the girl's hand—the one who dreaded leaving her baby.

Manon was the picture of abject despair. Her hair was mussed, the prison uniform was too large and her tear-stained cheeks were blotched from dust that the great wooden wheels threw into her face. She had been assigned to a seat at the front end of the cart, almost directly over the shafts. It was dusty but preferable to the close interior where women were crowded together without any consideration for their comfort.

Fabien discerned the little caravan from a distance and immediately cut across a field which brought him out at a bend of the road just as the cortège drew near.

The guards saw nothing terrific in his approach, however they had been cautioned that no one was to molest their progress, so the leader shouted, "Get out of the road there—we're in a hurry."

"It is not my purpose to stop you, gentlemen," corrected Fabien. "I would like to proceed with you."

"We have strict orders to watch the prisoners," continued the chief. "But you seem a harmless young man and we will relax in our duty for a while—provided you can make it worth while."

"I have only about sixteen pistoles in my purse," replied Fabien regretfully.

"In that case we shall act generously," offered the chief. "It shall only cost you a crown an hour for conversing with any of our girls that you may prefer—that is the ordinary price in Paris."

Fabien made a payment and was permitted to peer into the caravans unmolested. He was searching for Manon, although the guards did not suspect that he had a passion for any particular girl. They imagined his interest was the indulgence of a boyish whim and that any creature would do for an hour's amusement.

Fabien saw Manon seated in front of the second van. It would be impossible to describe the torment her dejected appearance caused him. For a few paces he followed along, gazing at her in mute agony before he called, "Manon!" in a flood of lost self-control.

"My darling!" Manon recognized his voice before she saw him and unconsciously tried to leap from the wagon, but the chain checked her and she fell back in her former position.

Fabien jumped up on the shafts and

gathered Manon in a close embrace. She cried for joy and he could feel her tears mingling with his. They were both so overcome that for a long time neither uttered a word. After so much doubt and anxiety it was enough just to be together. Their future was so hopeless that it was better not to talk about it.

Grief and shame had taken a deep hold on Manon and she was ashamed to look into Fabien's eyes.

"You know that they are sending me on the ship to a penal colony in Louisiana?" she asked tremulously.

"Yes—" Fabien's hands held her tight.

"I am glad to have seen you before I go!" Manon was crying.

"My dear—I am going too. No power on earth can separate us again. I will find a way to sail on your ship." The desire to comfort Manon and stay with her had made Fabien forget for a moment that he was wanted for treason and murder.

She was so grateful for his devotion that a flood of tender emotion almost overcame her. She marveled at Fabien's excessive love and could not understand how she had

been fortunate enough to have inspired such a perfect passion.

"What happened to André? He tried to help me." There was a note of pride in Manon's voice.

"My dear, I know." Fabien dreaded the task ahead of him. "He sent you his love and asked me to look out for you."

"Was he captured for working against the King?" she asked anxiously.

"Worse than that, Manon. He was—"

"No!" she cried in anticipation. "Not—"

"Yes, darling." Fabien crushed her to him and spoke very softly into her ear. "He died trying to help you."

Burning tears welled up in her eyes and a great lump filled her throat. She could not talk and was grateful for Fabien's silent sympathy. She knew that he understood how she felt about her big brother, whom she had loved and who betrayed her. Fabien did not have the heart to add to her grief by saying it was the Comte's cowardly sword that took his life.

The jolting of the wagon made Manon miserably uncomfortable. Her face was colorless and her eyes had become circled with great lavender rings that made Fa-

bien's heart ache. In a tender effort to give her a little rest he removed his coat and, rolling it into a long pillow effect, had her lean against it from her chained position.

All the other women in the van were diverted—each in her own way—by this last-minute love-making en route to the ship.

When the guards discovered that Fabien was interested in the prettiest girl on the chains they demanded payment every time he spoke. Consequently his thin purse was speedily emptied. He was riding on the shafts at Manon's feet when a mounted guard drew rein alongside again and said, "We got to have some more money for your fare!"

"I have given you all I have." Fabien's voice seemed to imply that he was sorry, but it had no effect.

"Well, you can't ride for nothing—get off!" The butt end of a musket emphasized the command.

There was no alternative. With a reassuring pressure on Manon's hands, Fabien whispered that he would follow along, then he jumped off the wagon and stood at the roadside until the last van had passed. Unmindful of the clouds of dust, he followed

along, reconciled to whatever destiny fate had in store just as long as it left him free to live and love with Manon.

* * * * * * *

The sun was terrifically hot and directly overhead when the little procession from the Magdalen Prison arrived on the wharf at Havre.

A pitiful crowd, composed of heartbroken mothers, wondering children, sympathetic friends and remorseful sweethearts, were there to bid the unfortunate women a tearful good-by as final and more tragic than death. No one who had been deported ever came back!

The carts were driven out to the head of the largest wharf and the guards ordered the chained women to "Get out!"

Cramped and tired—broken in body as well as spirit—they stood in a pitiful line, as far apart as the heavy iron chain would permit, while their loved ones gathered around them in small, close groups.

The disconsolate young mother cradled her baby Jean in her arms for the last time and moaned about the injustice of separation.

The hardened sinner, who had no regrets

about deportation, looked over all the different groups and sneered. She was the only woman in the entire line who had neither friends nor relatives to weep at her misfortune. She stood alone. A woman whom France considered a menace and no longer wanted, a woman who had given her beauty, her youth and her ardor to men of the nobility and to others; to men who after ruining her life dropped her as they would an empty sack by the roadside. No wonder she appeared cynical, but at heart she was still the woman she would like to have been. She laughed boisterously, all to herself, to keep the lump down in her throat and the tears out of her eyes. "God, it's cruel!" she thought, and laughed again.

Fabien had rushed up to Manon and put his arms about her protectingly. They felt lost and out of place. All the silken glory of magnificent clothes and priceless jewels that had been theirs the night before at the Duc de Richelieu's salon had been literally stripped from them, leaving only two very tragic young people who had lost everything except their love for each other. They did not even own the clothes they wore—Fabien's suit was borrowed from Tiberge

and Manon's dress was a uniform from the Magdalen!

Passion and loyalty had been the indirect cause of all their misfortunes, yet happily enough it was the only thing that survived every ordeal.

Money, that had once seemed so vital to their happiness, now meant nothing. There was not a single coin between them, nor did it matter. In the excitement and stress of the moment Fabien had left his money on the card table at the Duc's salon, but if all his winnings had been in a sack at their feet on the wharf they would have been useless.

The only thing that concerned them was separation, and although Fabien had bolstered up Manon's courage by saying he was sailing with her for America, he knew there was not a chance in the world of his being able to board the deportation ship.

Within the hour Manon would be sent to exile, alone, and it was Fabien's lot to remain and suffer the consequences of opposing the King and murdering the Comte.

CHAPTER XXI

FABIEN ESCAPES ARREST

Moored to the end of the wharf was the grim little sailing vessel that was destined to carry the exiled women across the Atlantic to the penal colony in New Orleans, Louisiana.

It was an annual voyage and the passage required two long, agonizing months. However, the miserable accommodations and hardships did not prevent His Honor, the Governor of the distant Colony, from making the voyage in company with Synnelet, a favorite nephew, for the express purpose of selecting for themselves the most attractive of the condemned women.

While the ship was being loaded for the sail, two men leaned against the barrels on deck and calmly, yet with decided interest and speculation, looked over the chained women to see if they were particularly promising.

The Governor was about fifty, respectable in appearance and with a good face—that

reflected an understanding and reliable character.

Synnelet was younger by twenty years and his features were decidedly those of a sensualist. He was not married and had no desire to be.

After sizing the women up for some time the gaze of both men returned to Manon.

"At last they have sent us a woman worth looking at!" exclaimed Synnelet with a whistle of delight.

"I see the one you mean—but do you notice that her affection is already bestowed upon a young man?" The Governor saw Fabien holding Manon in his arms.

"What difference does that make? He will be left here, I shall take his place and she will be more interesting for the experience." Synnelet was impatient for the ship to get under way so that he might have Manon to himself.

The Governor had always given this headstrong nephew everything he wanted, so it was a foregone conclusion that the prettiest girl on the chain should be assigned to Synnelet's cabin and tender mercies.

The important matter of a companion being settled for Synnelet, the Governor left

him contemplating his future mistress, and went off to superintend the handling of a consignment of dangerous men that were being herded out on the wharf.

After the manner of the women these men were chained together and driven on to the ship like animals. There were convicts, thieves, rogues and murderers among them. All undesirable characters that were being stowed away in the unspeakably dirty hold of the ship like so many sacks of coal, to be dumped at the penal colony in America.

The armed guards chained these men to the ship's walls with scarcely enough room between them to move. The only light and air they were to have came through the close iron grating in the floor of the deck above. A terrible fate for any man, no matter how great his crime!

After the men had been securely locked away the Governor gave instructions for the women to be brought aboard. They were a pitiful sight, but the guards had neither mercy nor compassion for the unfortunate girls or their families and roughly brought the farewells to an abrupt end.

Manon clung so tightly to Fabien that he

was pushed along with her up to the gangplank before the guards realized what they had done.

"Clear out of here!" ordered the most burly fellow, addressing Fabien.

"There is time," he stalled, dreading to let Manon go.

"Yes, and this is it." The guard grabbed Manon roughly by the arm and pulling her away said, "Now, nothing's holding you—git."

Fabien's face turned a ghastly white, he set upon the guard with clenched fists, but was pushed aside and immediately pinioned by two other uniformed men whose duty it was to preserve order.

Sobbing piteously, Manon was pushed away from her lover. Their dreams of happiness were again shattered.

Synnelet, still watching Manon from the deck, called to his uncle, "That's the one for me, all right. She appears to be a faithful little soul." He was generous enough to admire traits in others that were foreign to his own nature.

"You shall have your choice, my boy." The Governor gave his nephew a fond smile.

Synnelet noticed that Manon was in a state of collapse as she and the other women were pulled and pushed across the gang-plank. It did not suit his plans for her to be too rudely treated and he hastened to speak with the guard in charge.

"Be gentle with this girl and see that she is not hurt," he requested.

The guard winked knowingly, but paid no attention to the suggestion.

Not for a moment had Fabien taken his eyes from Manon since she was torn from his arms and he made prisoner by the guards. He saw Synnelet, apparently a privileged character, speak in her behalf and it nearly drove him insane. He thought —she is being taken away from me again, I am powerless to follow, and even before the ship pulls anchor another man is waiting to annoy her!

As if in an incubus, Fabien saw the sailors scurrying about on deck preparing to get under way. The Captain was shouting commands. The crowd of sad friends and relatives gathered about the wharf head, waving a last farewell to their loved ones as the girls and women leaned over the railing, looking back with regret and longing. They

stood quite close together in a long line, because they were still bound together by the cumbersome iron chain.

Synnelet was directly behind Manon appraising her with a satisfied smile!

The ship's anchor was weighed. The hulk moved slowly away from the wharf. Manon was being taken away! ! !

* * * * * * *

Fabien wanted to curse. His mind was in a mad whirl. He seemed to hear Manon calling, calling to him for help, and he felt so small and helpless as he just stood there watching her move away from him.

Suddenly the sound of galloping horses penetrated his consciousness and their arrival caused a great commotion at the land end of the wharf. On recognizing the King's guard and men from the Magdalen Prison, Fabien's captors sensed something unusual and, eager to be in the midst of the excitement, they released their charge and ran back to find out what had brought these men to Havre.

Fabien was the only one who knew why they were there. The Comte's murder had been discovered and they had tracked him there to answer for the crime. It meant that

he would be thrown into prison and eventually consigned to the guillotine.

When the soldiers dismounted and hurried out on the pier scanning every face for the man they had been ordered to capture, Fabien felt trapped. There was no possible chance to elude the soldiers and get off of the wharf; besides he had no desire to take another step away from Manon. What could he do? The boat was carrying her away, out toward the miles and miles of ocean that would separate them for the rest of their lives.

A plan came to Fabien so quickly that there did not seem time for it to be his own. It was inspirational and from the moment of its conception until he rushed to the end of the wharf and dove into the water, not a second had elapsed. He was not even conscious of the fact that he had knocked down two women who stood in his path, and pushed a man into the water as he cleared a place to dive.

When Fabien emerged from his long plunge, he caught a glimpse of the commotion he had caused. The end of the dock was crowded with uniformed soldiers, guards and people who shouted excitedly when he

came up for air. A volley of shots peppered the water about his head and one strong armed soldier set a musket hurling through the air with deadly aim. Fabien saw it all at a glance, then both arms went up out of the water and with a defiant laugh he sank back—and disappeared!

Soldiers and guards peered intently into the water from the wharf, but they waited in vain for their man to reappear. Apparently he had been hit by their fire, or the musket, and gone to the bottom of the ocean. Justice had been meted out, although they were cheated of the satisfaction of delivering the murderer to their Chief.

What will happen to Manon without Fabien's protection?

CHAPTER XXII

SHE IS MY WIFE!

As the ship put out to sea, Manon was among the privileged few who remained on deck, consequently it was her misfortune to witness her lover's tragic death. She longed to end her own thoroughly miserable existence by leaping into the sea and sinking to a watery grave as near to Fabien's as possible. It was cruel to be sent to an unknown land where life would be prolonged only to encounter further pain and heartache. Utterly overcome by melancholy thoughts of death and despair, Manon fell upon the deck in a dead faint.

The weight of her body, pulling on the chain, attracted the attention of the hard faced woman who after looking curiously at the pitiful, unconscious little figure, knelt down and pillowed Manon's head in her lap. She rubbed the pallid forehead with uncertain fingers and spoke in a gentler tone than she had used in years. Apparently Manon would never lose her power to arouse

commendable emotions in other women.

When the Governor noticed that his nephew's "choice" was in trouble he ordered the bonds removed so that she could have more freedom and ease. This meant that eight of the other women were also released, because one long chain had served to fasten them together. They endeavored to express their appreciation of this temporary freedom by gathering around Manon and offering suggestions. They carried her to the bow and propped her against a huge coil of rope close to the rail. They were prevented from giving further aid by an order to go below, where it was their lot to remain for the greater part of the voyage. An amazing incident saved Manon from similar treatment.

Everyone on board was busy tending to duties involved in getting under way, and at last Manon was left alone to recover from her momentary weakness. She hated the return to consciousness. It would have been so sweet to stay asleep, always. Now that Fabien was dead she had no desire to live. Her heart was burdened with sorrow and she prayed that death might seal her tormenting thoughts forever.

As Manon looked tearfully over the ship's rail, she suddenly gasped in amazement. Her eyes stared in wonder, "Dear God, am I dead that I see a thing like this? . . . No! He is real! He is alive! Fabien!" She leaned far over the rail and whispered her lover's name.

Clutching frantically at a small rope ladder that hung from the ship's side, Fabien was pulling himself out of the water!

With the agility of a trapeze performer he quickly climbed the swaying ladder and gathered Manon into his arms.

Unmindful of cold drenched clothing she clung to him as though she never could and never would let him go again.

"Oh, my darling!" she cried happily, "I thought you were drowned."

"That is what I wanted the soldiers to think—but not you," he paused and smothered her face with kisses. "My sweet dear, were you worried?"

"Worried?—I thought I was dying—I wanted to die. But not now, not with you here again." Manon's arms crept around Fabien and he held her close.

"I couldn't see you sail away without me

—that is why I am here." A smile of peace suffused Fabien's face.

"Darling, I forgot—where did the soldiers wound you?" Manon pulled away and carefully looked Fabien over, fully expecting to see blood.

"Every shot missed, but I pretended to be hit and swam under water around the keel of the boat and came up down there when you saw me."

"I didn't even know that you could swim!" Manon's tone was a bit reproachful. She was so much a part of Fabien's life that she wanted a knowledge of his past as well as the right to share his future. There was no doubt about enjoying the present. They stood on the forward deck, with arms about each other, looking ahead out toward the open sea while a warm breeze made hopeless tangles of Manon's curls.

In the happiness of being reunited all thought of danger faded away. In the sweet oblivion of their love Manon and Fabien were still able to forget that she was being deported and that he had no right to be aboard.

By this time the ship was well under way

and the Governor had leisure to come for'-ard with Synnelet for a talk with "the pretty little wench who had fainted." They expected to find her still reclining on the coil of rope and very grateful and agreeable to them for her freedom. Instead they saw a vital and radiantly animated young girl in the arms of a stranger, enjoying the voyage as though they were privileged guests rather than prisoners.

Striding up to Fabien the Governor demanded, "Be good enough to explain, sir, how you happened to get aboard!"

"By the ship's ladder, sir. Your sailors neglected to pull it up. You see I am not yet dry from my swim." Fabien brushed water from his wet clothing and smiled whimsically.

Synnelet always got what he wanted, without any effort on his own part. If he had been a general in the army he would have been most successful because he had a wonderful ability to make others fight his battles. The sight of Manon in another man's arms aroused his fury and set his brain to working. "In a situation like this," he reasoned, "the Captain is the boss—not the Governor." Immediately Synnelet turned

on his heel and solicited the Captain's aid. In a very short time they returned fortified by two strapping sailors, and confronted Fabien.

"Stand aside there—release the jade," thundered the Captain.

Fabien's face hardened. It was as though he raised a mask to hide the tumult of emotions and dread that might betray his fear.

"Your pardon, sir, but she is my wife." Fabien's arm moved protectingly around her.

Synnelet was annoyed. His little dream of love was shattered. Besides, it was exceedingly upsetting to be balked in something on which he had set his heart and mind. The Governor frowned ominously and even the Captain looked a little worried. This calm announcement of Fabien's put altogether a different light on things. Manon, tremulous in the shelter of Fabien's arms, gazed up at him adoringly, while he calmly continued to regard the others.

The Captain and the Governor turned aside and whispered in an undertone. It was evident that they were not entirely in accord.

"Put him off the ship," said the Gover-

nor in a voice loud enough for Fabien to hear.

"Yes," chimed in Synnelet, "we insist that you send him ashore. Turn him over to the guards. It is evident that he is wanted by them."

The Captain looked back at the fast receding shore line, already more than a mile away. There was a humorous gleam in his eyes which did not escape Manon and Fabien, who had been awaiting the result of the conference with no little trepidation.

"It will be rather difficult walking, sir," said the Captain to the Governor. "Besides, the law permits a husband to accompany his wife. If the guards wanted this man badly enough they should have got him. For the moment we will do nothing about it."

The Governor frowned. He could not infringe upon the Captain's authority. From time immemorial, at sea, the word of the Captain has been law for all on board to obey.

Synnelet, headstrong and impetuous, started to protest, but a quick word of caution from his uncle effectively silenced him.

The Captain waited another moment for

a coherent voiced dissension to his verdict, then, as everyone remained silent, he turned to Fabien and said, "You heard what I said, Monsieur? For the time being you are to remain on board—you will work your way across."

Manon's and Fabien's eyes met in a frantic effort to convey their relief, their love, and their hope for continued good luck in the new land that was destined to be their future home.

CHAPTER XXIII

ON THE HIGH SEAS

THE days that followed opened up a new life for Fabien. The hard manual labor that befell his lot as a member of the ship's crew, combined with the bracing salt air and plain but wholesome food, built him up physically and gave him a keen mental stimulation that was in direct contrast to the romantic, inactive student who had studied for the Priesthood.

Fabien's one regret was that his moments with Manon were altogether too few and too far apart. His duties did not permit otherwise and all possible moments of leisure were eagerly sought for and anticipated by them both.

Fabien was unwearied in his efforts to save Manon from every inconvenience. She knew this and her gratitude, together with an appreciation for the odd situation that Fabien had placed himself in for her sake, made her so tender, and attentive to his every desire that their moments together

were a continual exchange of attentions and love.

These rare leisure moments usually occurred in the early evening when the deported women were allowed a few moments on the open deck before being locked in their quarters for the night.

Manon had won the fine old Captain's heart and respect. He deplored the fact that so charming a young girl had been deported. He was sure it was a mistake because such errors had been known to occur as the result of jealousy of some one in authority.

More than anything else the fine old seaman admired virtue and he was positive that Manon's sweet face reflected all the good qualities that a wife should possess.

Eight weeks of life aboard ship had slipped into the past. It was the longest and most tranquil period that Manon and Fabien had ever had together.

One beautiful moonlight night they were on the forward deck while the ship, with all sails set, sailed straight into a great golden path of moonlight.

"No magic carpet could carry us on a happier journey!" sighed Manon contentedly

as she nestled her head in the warm hollow of Fabien's shoulder. "It is a miracle that you eluded arrest and are here. I shall not mind living in America—or any place—with you!"

"Are you sure that you will never want to change your mind?" Fabien paused long enough to search Manon's eyes for the answer he wanted. "Because just ahead of us, perhaps a day's sail—is a new country and we do not know what awaits us there. For my part, I do not mind. There was no future for us in France and your very touch makes me happy and is more priceless than gold."

"Then you shall be the richest man in the world. I love you with a tenderness that will last until death."

"My dear!" Fabien covered her slim hands with his own and continued, fervently, "Manon, will you start this new life of ours as my wife?"

With radiant face Manon turned toward him, then as suddenly averted her head, covering it with her hands. Fabien lightly touched her shoulder in alarm, not daring to speak. His fears were allayed, however as Manon slowly looked up with her beauti-

ful eyes swimming in unshed tears and said:

"I have dreamed of it—oh, so many times—but never spoke—afraid I would degrade you—that I was not worthy of you—"

"Not worthy, my sweet one," returned Fabien, "It is I who am not worthy of you. Your sweetness and your love have been a haven of rest and comfort to me." Tenderly he held her to him, her head against his shoulder.

"Oh, no, Fabien. That is not true. However, it is good of you to say it. I know that I have not merited the almost incredible fidelity you have given me and even while loving you I have caused you many annoyances that only your wonderful love could forgive. But now it seems that my very nature is altered. The tears that you have so frequently seen me shed were not tears of misfortune. I have wept unselfishly, from the tenderness and compassion that I feel for you; and I shall never cease to upbraid myself for all the sacrifices and terrible things that you have endured for me."

"Manon, sweetheart, it has been worth it. And now—when shall we be married? Will

you come with me now to the Captain? He can marry us. He will—and we shall be able to land in this new country as we should."

"Yes, Fabien darling—anything you say. I want truly to be your wife." Manon was eager and thrilled at Fabien's suggestion.

This new idea, this great adventure—marriage—brought more wonderful thoughts of joy and anticipation than either of them had before experienced.

Guileless as two children they made their way aft, hand in hand, to the Captain's cabin.

Fabien knocked at the cabin door and a gruff voice said, "Come in."

With his arm protectingly around Manon he opened the door and entered. Before them, seated around the table were the Captain, the Governor and his nephew Synnelet. The Captain rose to his feet as they came slowly forward and inquired, "Well, what can I do for you?"

"If you please, Monsieur—will you marry us?" Fabien's voice faltered slightly and he had an uncomfortable feeling that all was not well.

"Marry you!" exploded the Captain.

"You told me two months ago that you were man and wife."

The Governor, who had been sitting with an astonished look upon his face, half rose from his seat as he asked, "Do you mean to tell me that you two are not married?"

Fabien's face must have expressed the consternation that swept over him, for he felt Manon shrink close to him and her quick convulsive grasp on his arm brought a full realization of his mistake. In the joyous thoughts of the new life that was opening for them, he had utterly forgotten his previous statement made to the Captain weeks before.

There was nothing to do now but face the situation. Fabien held Manon's hand more tightly and answered calmly, "No, we were not married, but we love each other and wish you to marry us before we land."

For a full moment there was a deep silence. Across the Captain's face one emotion after another clearly expressed his rising anger at being duped by them both and disillusioned by Manon.

The Governor was amazed into stunned silence. To think that Fabien had tricked them all by a lie. He blamed himself as an

utter fool for having respected the so-called holy bonds of matrimony.

It took Synnelet to break the silence. "That is good," he said, stepping forward. "That is very good, Monsieur; and now that we know the truth," he continued, turning to his uncle, "there is no reason why I cannot have her."

"Right, my boy," replied the Governor slowly nodding his head to the nephew he never denied, then turning to Fabien with a slightly puzzled expression he said, "Since the girl is not your wife, she is any man's property, and shall be given to my nephew."

Fabien tightened his grasp around Manon's shoulders. His own stupidity had brought their dream castle tumbling about their ears. But he would not give her up. He had gone through much for her sake and was now ready to lay down his life if it would help her.

As Synnelet came forward to claim his new property, Manon cried out in terror and Fabien leaped at him like a madman. His hands went about Synnelet's throat. With a roar of pent-up anger the Captain hurled himself upon Fabien and forced him back

against the wall where he held him until reinforced by two husky sailors who had been hastily summoned by the Governor.

"I am sorry, sir," Fabien admitted to the Captain, "Let me explain—I am sure you will understand!"

"Throw this mad fool in with the convicts," ordered the Captain.

As the sailors bore him toward the door he fought madly like one possessed, as he saw Synnelet struggling to take Manon into his arms.

The odds against Fabien were too great and he was thrown through the open hatch into the hold below. He fell upon the reeking, naked bodies of the half crazed convicts, and lay sprawled in their midst unconscious from the impact of his fall.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE MUTINY

MANON was more terrified for Fabien's safety than for her own welfare. Her newly found love had completely shut out her former selfishness. It did not matter, now, what happened to her as long as Fabien was safe.

Sobbing—half hysterical—she struggled to leave the cabin. She wanted to follow the Captain and plead for Fabien. The old seaman had been so splendid to her that she did not realize how utterly hopeless any appeal would be since he had learned of their deceitfulness. No sacrifice that she could make would soften him enough to have Fabien removed from the hold of the ship. But Manon did not know this—she was sure the Captain would do as she wished and she fought madly to get by Synnelet, who laughed and smiled in anticipated satisfaction and barred her way.

Manon's tiny fists beat hopelessly upon his chest but he only smiled in delight. He

was much pleased with Manon and her fiery temper amused him greatly. Certainly it was an indication that his conquest would not be an easy one. However, that only added zest to his purpose. She was his property—there would be no opposition and he could take his time about taming her into sweet submission.

The Governor was well pleased with the situation. Before leaving the cabin he paused a moment and looked back at Manon as she struggled against Synnelet's advances; but he only smiled indulgently, shrugged his shoulders nonchalantly and walked away from them without interfering. It was no longer his affair. He had done his part, besides was he not young once, himself, and the hot blood of youth must be served.

Wildly and more fiercely Manon continued her struggle to escape from Synnelet, but with each effort her strength weakened. Her gown was torn and her gorgeous golden curls, sadly disheveled, were spread about her half naked shoulders like a golden halo of sunshine.

The nearness of Manon had aroused a passion within Synnelet that was fast get-

ting beyond his desire to control. He had played with his beautiful new toy just as long as he could. Suddenly he seized her, brushed aside her arms and crushing her to him, kissed her madly.

Vainly Manon worked to free herself. Synnelet's burning kisses covered her neck and shoulders. His hard, labored breathing fairly smothered her as she strove to turn her head away that he could not find her lips. Then she felt herself lifted, bodily, in his hateful arms and carried across the cabin. Vaguely she sensed the easing of her body upon the couch and saw Synnelet's face strangely grotesque, as he leaned over her. Through a mist of tears his countenance seemed to become more and more indistinct. Shortly it disappeared entirely and Manon knew no more. She had fainted.

* * * * * * *

With the return of consciousness, Fabien sat up. His clothes were torn and his face and hands were covered with blood. He had not been stunned for very long because overhead he saw the sailors securely battening down the hatch cover through which he had been dropped.

It was a dark, gloomy hold into which he had been thrown, literally stinking with sweat and filth. Above, the dim rays of a ship's lantern sent down a faint light that enabled Fabien to discern the convicts, scores of them, chained like animals to stanchions in the ship's beams.

They stared at him curiously. His sudden advent in their midst had aroused them, for a moment, from their apathy of despair into which days of confinement in their foul quarters had cast them. One or two of the men laughed—meaningless laughs inspired by crazed minds.

Still in a half daze Fabien gazed around and became conscious of their curiosity, their mocking voices and the clang of their chains. It all tended to bring back a swift remembrance of his fate. Like a madman he lurched to his feet and climbed up the iron grating to the locked hatch above, where he pounded, vainly. It was useless. His bruised hands were but puny instruments for the giant task. Even his shoulders pressing with all his strength failed to make any impression. It was hopeless. He was unequal to the task. With a groan of despair he descended into the hold, fell back

on the floor and buried his head in his hands.

The taunting laughs of the convicts, their bits of sarcastic advice, caused the germ of an idea to form itself in Fabien's maddened brain. It might be possible. At least it seemed to present the only hope of escape. Swiftly he rose to his feet and standing in the midst of the chained men looked at them calmly, yet with a tenseness that for a moment surprised them. He could afford to make no mistakes. Some of the men returned his gaze curiously, some of them openly mocked him while others were utterly indifferent.

"You were once men," shouted Fabien in derision glancing around to be sure that he had caught their attention, "and they have made animals of you! In the early morning we will land—you will be chained to the plow and the mill wheel—you will be beasts —driven—driven before the lash until you die!"

Fabien directed his tirade to one huge man in particular. He was a veritable giant with hairy arms and chest and animal-like features. Into his half dead eyes came a sudden gleam. Fascinated he listened attentively.

Fabien noticed this interest and became a perfect dynamo of energy. Moving closer he said craftily, "There is a way of escape —you outnumber the crew two to one—get out of here—take command of the ship and turn back to the high seas where all the gold of commerce can be yours for the taking."

Frowningly, the giant turned this thought over in his mind while Fabien went from one man to another, talking to them, urging them to mutiny. Then he returned to the giant—his best ally. Bending over him, Fabien rattled the chain that held him prisoner and said contemptuously, "Have you grown fond of these chains—or are they too strong for you to break?"

With a snarl of rage the giant lurched to his feet. For a moment he held his breath and gropingly found a firm support for his feet, then he twisted the chains around his wrists, took a strong hold with each enormous hand and heaved his huge shoulders forward. Like whipcords the veins stood out on his forehead. His face turned purple with the gigantic effort he was putting forth. Back of him he felt the chains begin to give and suddenly he shot forward halfway across the hold! The chains had

parted! With a yell of triumph he staggered to his feet, the dangling links clanged threateningly as he held his huge hands above his head for all to see.

The men became crazed with the possibility of freedom and worked crazily. They were in a panic of excitement.

With Fabien urging him on, the huge bulk of a man went from one prisoner to another and adding his strength to theirs tugged and pulled at the chains until all the convicts were free.

This sudden release inflamed them like animals gone mad. They milled about like cattle at the beginning of a stampede, just before that awful rush that is followed by devastation and death.

Fabien dominated their will during that first few moments of liberty. They followed his example and swarmed up the iron bars like monkeys. From all sides the crazed men used their combined strength to burst the final gates that held them from their goal.

The very frenzy into which the convicts had worked themselves added tremendous strength to their efforts. Finally the hatch began to give. With a roar of triumph the

men redoubled their efforts. A final snap and the metal doors parted, and clattered back on the deck. The giant's head and shoulders appeared first. As soon as he gained the deck the others followed, madly shouting to each other incoherent bits about taking possession of the ship.

Through this writhing, fighting mass of humanity, Fabien fought his way upward and outward. He suddenly realized that the mutiny he had incited was about to cause unlooked-for trouble. Manon was not safe with all the convicts at large. He must find her at once.

The outbreak was a complete surprise and the ship's crew was caught at a cruel disadvantage. Vainly the Captain and the Governor tried to organize them into a semblance of resistance. But the onset was too sudden, too unexpected and the convicts so far outnumbered the sailors that the result was inevitable. Backed as it was with the fury of madmen the half naked demons rushed down the deck. Here and there the conflict broke away into hand-to-hand conflicts as one doughty man met another.

The giant was the spirit of the attack. If one of the ship's crew got in his way he

picked up the unfortunate sailor and hurled him bodily over the rail into the sea.

Almost crazed with anxiety, Fabien finally succeeded in sidestepping the mélée. With a shudder he turned his back on the fighting and ruthless killing going on about deck and made his way to the cabin door where he had last seen Manon. It was locked but he wrenched it open and his face turned livid as he saw her lying helpless across the couch with Synnelet bending over looking toward the door as if suddenly disturbed by the commotion going on outside.

CHAPTER XXV

ALL IS WELL

With a cry of rage that resembled the snarl of an angry beast, Fabien leaped across the threshold and hurled himself bodily through the air straight at the hated countenance that loomed above Manon's prostrate body.

Terror-stricken, Synnelet fled and fear gave him speed enough to slip through another door leading into another cabin. He just had time to shoot the bolt home as Fabien crashed against it and beat furiously but vainly with his fists in an effort to get in.

The commotion and sudden intrusion served to arouse Manon from her deathlike trance. She opened her eyes and saw—not Synnelet but Fabien! Across her face, transforming it, swept an overpowering emotion of love and with a cry of joy she rose to her feet and rushed into her lover's arms.

The joy of possession, the safety and

nearness of the one he loved better than life itself served to calm Fabien as nothing else could have done. Pausing long enough to hold Manon close to him—to press one long, lingering kiss on her lips, he forced himself from her embrace.

"I must go and see what is best for us to do. There is mutiny aboard, but don't fear! I will return. Lock yourself in until I come for you."

As Fabien cautiously let himself out, Manon bolted the lock securely behind him, then she pushed everything that she could move against the door that Synnelet had used a few moments before. There was nothing else she could do, except wait for Fabien's return and pray for his safety.

When Fabien let himself out of the cabin he was just in time to see Synnelet emerge from the doorway adjoining, and look furtively about. As he caught sight of Fabien he looked back, vainly seeking an avenue of escape, seeing none and not desiring to be trapped in the room he turned and fled toward the bow.

With a bound Fabien was after him. Synnelet paused long enough to get a belaying pin from the rail, then as Fabien drew near

he stopped for a moment and hurled it with deadly aim straight at his head. Fabien dodged and missed the blow but it handicapped his time and gave Synnelet a chance to elude him and jump into the rigging.

Synnelet preferred the ship's rigging only to combat with Fabien, but he had no choice and made his way upward never pausing until he had gained the crow's nest.

Like a bloodhound that cannot be shaken from his quarry, Fabien went after him. But Synnelet was triumphant. He had drawn a short sword and leered at Fabien across the dangerous blade as he climbed nearer and nearer.

All about them on the deck below the fighting continued, although none of them were more determined to kill than the two men high up in the crow's nest.

The ship was yawing from port to starboard and back again. It headed into the wind and then ran before it. The great sails slatted from side to side with a force that threatened to bring all the rigging down on the heads of the fighters below.

It was precarious footing for both Synnelet and Fabien but their intense fury and hatred for each other caused them to give

little thought to anything except their own private grudge. Manon could not belong to both of them! Each man knew this and was determined that he would be the one to claim her.

Synnelet had the advantage and several times made desperate lunges at Fabien with his sword. Each time Fabien was able to get out of reach just in time. A heavy rolling sea almost brought Synnelet on top of Fabien as he leaned from the crow's nest and Fabien clung to the rigging. With a smile of triumph the pampered nephew thrust forward, fiercely, with all his strength, toward Fabien's breast. The lunging of the ship into a wave caused an abrupt check for which Synnelet was unprepared. He struggled desperately to regain his balance but his feet lost their foothold and with a great cry of terror he dangled perilously by his hands a hundred feet or more above the deck. Like a huge human pendulum he swung by his hands from side to side at each roll of the ship.

Fabien clung tighter to the rigging and ceased his efforts to reach Synnelet. Was Providence to take from his hands the revenge he so eagerly desired?

Piteously, Synnelet looked at Fabien and implored mercy. This was not the glorious ending he had planned for their combat, but in his desperation he forgot that just a moment before he had tried to plunge his sword into Fabien's breast.

Fabien continued to stare in bewilderment—he could not have saved Synnelet even if he had cared to risk his own life. The men on deck below were engrossed in their own battles and did not hear the pitiful cry for help—but it would have made no difference if they had.

It was only a question of seconds now, Synnelet's strength was fast waning. A sudden pitch and one hand lost its grip—a roll the other way and Synnelet, with a gasping cry, plunged down—down into the boiling sea below.

Like a man stunned, Fabien clung to the flimsy ladder. God had taken upon Himself the punishment he had sought to mete out. Fabien's lips moved in silent prayer and his thoughts again returned to Manon. He must go to her. Halfway down the ladder he paused to look below. The convicts were victorious and the lust of battle had turned into a lust of a baser sort.

The deported women had been taken from their quarters and as Fabien looked he saw one of the convicts pull a woman into his arms. Other women were running, terrified, about the deck—each pursued by a man who saw in her his reward for the battle he had just been through.

"What if one of them was Manon!" Quickly Fabien descended and fought his way through the mad scramble on deck. At last he reached the cabin where he had left her. Softly he knocked on the door and as softly called her name. The bolt slid back and with a muttered, "Thank God!" Fabien took her into his arms. She clung to him in terror, sobbing as if her heart would break.

"Oh, Fabien—my dear! I thought you would never come back—and I was afraid—you were gone so long. The women have been screaming and some one knocked, but I didn't open—I was afraid—" Her words died away into a convulsive sob.

Fabien calmed her while he explained all that had happened.

"I must leave you again, dear, to see if the convicts are really in command of the ship. You must be brave, because if they

have done away with the old crew they will turn pirates and carry us out to sea. If I can find a boat we can manage to get it overboard and reach America—land is in sight now—remember it is our only chance—I can see no other way of escape."

"Yes—hurry and find out—I would rather go adrift on a raft than stay here any longer." Manon had control of herself again and was thoroughly aware of their precarious outlook.

"I hope I find the convicts either nursing their wounds or cuddling their women. Let them do anything, just so long as they forget about you. I will return soon, dear!"

Manon stifled a sob. Swiftly their arms went about each other, their lips met—then she bravely sent Fabien out.

He sauntered around the deck. Signs of the conflict were everywhere. His own disheveled appearance failed to attract attention as he walked aft. Neither the Captain nor the Governor was to be seen; they had been imprisoned or slain and thrown overboard. Those of the crew who had not joined the mutinying convicts had met death or been thrown bodily into the hold.

Fabien's ruse to escape from the hold had

been more successful than he anticipated, but the result was appalling. The convicts were in complete charge of the ship and running wild. Manon was in greater danger now than before.

Fabien noticed that night was fast approaching. The shore line was faintly discernible. To his horror he discovered that they were headed *away* from land! From the stern, a lifeboat lashed to the davits suggested a means of escape. While he was carefully examining the lashings to see how they worked, the giant approached and put his great arm familiarly around Fabien's shoulder.

"Well, friend," he said, "your plan of escape worked! I've swapped places with the old Captain. I'm going to make him sweat down in the hold and use him for navigating later on." The giant was surprisingly verbose.

"Later on," interrupted Fabien. "What do you mean?"

"Well, you don't think we're heading for the penal colony to be wrapped up in chains again, do you? No! ! !—Maybe we'll land some place else—and maybe we won't; but we got our women with us and we'll have

a colony of our own, at sea or on land, it don't matter. Keep an eye open on deck for me, friend, while I go below and make sure I got the prettiest—well, while I look things over.'" With a grand swagger the giant went below.

Fabien waited until he disappeared before darting into another doorway that led to Manon. After hearing the new Captain's plan there was no doubt about the advisability of escaping in a lifeboat.

"Manon—Manon!" whispered Fabien at the door, "Come, dear—quickly!"

Immediately she appeared with a great-coat wrapped about her and a man's hat pulled over her curls.

"I am ready—but don't leave me again!"

"You darling! Never." Fabien smiled his approval at her forethought in assuming a partial disguise, but there was no time for conversation or love-making.

Without another word they went on deck, clinging to the shadows to make themselves inconspicuous. Going aft to the stern davits they crawled into the lifeboat. Fabien handled the ropes, hand over hand, until the boat hit the waves with a hard flat splash; then he loosened the ropes, shot the

oars in place and rowed for the dim shore.

Presently a convict sailor spied them and raised an alarm. The deck swarmed with poorly disciplined seamen hurling various missiles at the little black spot in the darkness. Unable to hit the fugitives they cursed their luck and returned to new duties about the ship.

The sea was uncomfortably rough for a small man power boat but Fabien and Manon did not mind,—land, a new land was not far away and it would be their home where they could begin life again—this time as man and wife.

Fabien pulled in the oars and crawled back to the wide stern seat with Manon. He kept one arm around her and the other hand on the rudder as the waves and tide carried them shoreward.

Smiling into each other's eyes their lips met in a long, wonderful kiss of love and happy fulfillment.

THE END

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